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At Home in Chinatown: a Needs Assessment for a Senior Housing Project and Cultural Community Center in Portland's Chinatown

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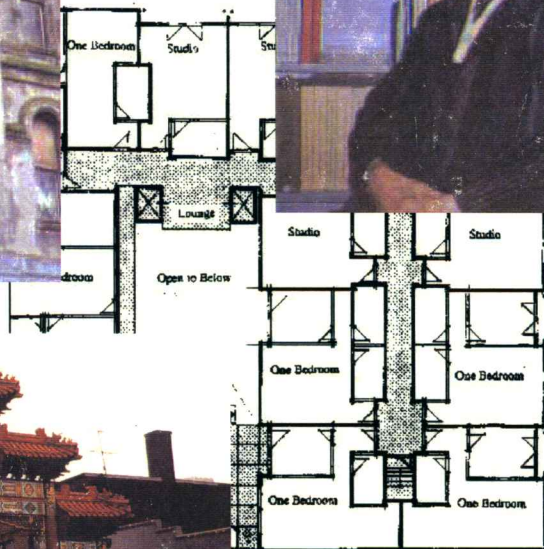
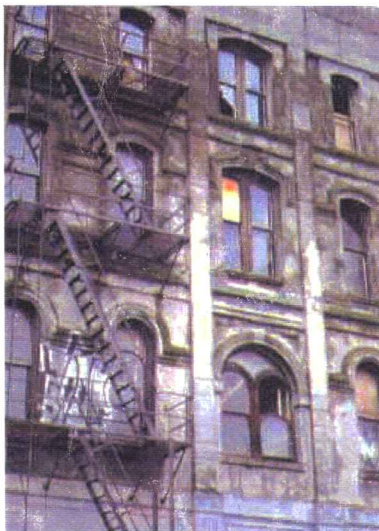
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At Home in Chinatown :

A Needs Assessment for a Senior Housing Project and Cultural Community Center in Portland's Chinatown

Prepared for the *Chinatown Senior Housing Committee*



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April 12, 1999
Master of Urban and Regional Planning
Professional Planning Workshop
Portland State University

The Professional Planning Workshop

This project was undertaken as part of the Professional Planning Workshop in Portland State University's Master of Urban and Regional Planning program. The Planning Workshop provides students with the opportunity to put their knowledge and training to work in a professional planning experience. Student teams develop consulting relationships and perform services for clients in the community which address the client's needs, regional issues, and the professional interests of the workshop participants. The Workshop provides experience in planning for constructive social and environmental change, while considering the planner's ethical responsibility to serve the public interest.

The Chinatown Senior Housing Committee

The Chinatown Senior Housing Committee is a group of concerned citizens and leaders dedicated to revitalizing Portland's Chinatown and serving the needs of Portland's Asian-American elder communities.

The members include:

Suenn Ho
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We are also deeply in debt to the members of the Chinatown Senior Housing Committee: Suenn Ho, Betty Jean Lee, Louis Lee, Jimmie Luey, Norman Locke, Garry Papers, John Southgate and Will Wright. Their careful guidance, enthusiasm, and willingness to share their insights and contacts within the community not only made our work possible, but also made it pleasurable. We especially wish to thank Betty Jean Lee, whose passion and commitment to Chinatown and Portland's Chinese community is inspirational.

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Executive Summary

The Chinatown Senior Housing Committee, a group of concerned citizens and leaders, is exploring the possibility of building senior housing and a cultural community center in Chinatown. The project is intended to help revitalize Chinatown and provide needed services to Portland's Asian community. To aid the Committee in achieving their goals, four Masters students in the Professional Planning Workshop at Portland State University completed a needs assessment of Chinese-American seniors in the Portland metropolitan area. This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Planning Workshop Group.

The Workshop Group undertook demographic analysis, conducted a literature search, administered a survey, and conducted interviews with Chinese seniors. The survey provided initial information on the importance of Chinatown to the Chinese-American community, interest in living there, and desired features in a senior housing project and community center. Further insights were gained from interviews, which allowed more detailed exploration of topics identified from the survey responses and other sources, such as language barriers, changing family structure and other factors contributing to social isolation.

The needs assessment revealed a number of themes crucial to the development of a senior housing project and cultural community center. First and foremost, Chinatown is important to the Chinese-American community. While not everybody contacted was interested in living in Chinatown, they saw its value as a cultural center and supported revitalization efforts. Other assumptions of the Chinatown Senior Housing Committee were verified in the survey and interviews. For instance, many Chinese seniors are experiencing varying degrees of social isolation, and it is this group that is most interested in living in Chinatown. The Chinese-American community, as well as Chinese seniors, expressed a desire for Chinatown to become more livable. Chinese seniors expressed ways in which Chinatown would be more suitable as a residential neighborhood. A cultural community center is needed in the community and will improve the livability of Chinatown. Lastly, Chinese seniors are interested in affordable housing in Chinatown.

Based on the primary finding of the needs assessment, the Professional Planning Workshop Group recommends the following to the Chinatown Senior Housing Committee:

- **Build Affordable Housing for Independent Seniors in Chinatown.** A significant number of Chinese-American seniors are interested in living in Chinatown, but only if the rents are very affordable. Little interest was shown for market-rate housing, or assisted living facilities.
- **Build an Asian Cultural Community Center.** The cultural community center will provide activities and services that will reduce isolation among elder Chinese Americans. The center will also draw residents and visitors to Chinatown from throughout the region, helping to revitalize the area.
- **Partner with an Experienced Developer.** The Committee should take advantage of the Portland area's for-profit and non-profit development community. Creating a new community development corporation is not necessary.

The Workshop Group believes that by following these recommendations, the Chinatown Senior Housing Committee will best meet their goals of revitalizing Chinatown and serving Chinese-American seniors.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Executive Summary.....	iii
Introduction	1
The Time is Now...	
The Committee's Project	
Progress to Date	
Our Work: A Needs Assessment.....	7
Professional Planning Workshop Group	
Role of the Workshop Group	
Context: Population Profile	9
Population, Geographic Distribution and Immigration	
Linguistic Ability and Communication Barriers	
Intergenerational Cultural Conflicts	
Household and Housing Characteristics	
Education and Labor Force Characteristics	
Income and Poverty Status	
Reaching the Chinese-American Community	17
The Chinatown Survey	
Interviews with Chinese Seniors	
What We Heard	21
Chinatown's Importance to the Chinese-American Community	
Social Isolation Among Chinese Seniors	
Elements of a Senior Housing Development	
Making Chinatown More Livable	
Project to Benefit All Cultures	
Recommendation	33
Develop Senior Housing	
Create a Cultural Community Center	

Final Reflections	39
Bibliography	41
Appendices	45
Appendix A: Sample Survey	
Appendix B: Survey Results in Raw Form	
Appendix C: Survey Results in Percentages	
Appendix D: Population Estimate Methodology	
Appendix E: Nonprofit Housing Developers	
Appendix F: Resources and Contact List	
Appendix G: Income Levels and Housing Affordability For Northwest Pilot Project Clients in 1999	

Introduction

In early 1998, a small group of concerned citizens began meeting to discuss the future of Chinatown, a 10-block area within Portland's Old Town neighborhood. Chinatown is rich in cultural heritage, but has struggled in recent years to improve physically and economically while still maintaining its unique identity. The group's discussions coincided with early city planning efforts to craft a new Old Town/Chinatown Development Plan. This was a time when visions for the larger neighborhood were being discussed and goals for the coming years were being set. This small, informal group became increasingly concerned with how impending development in the areas surrounding Chinatown, as well as potential changes resulting from the yet-to-be-completed Development Plan, would affect Chinatown. They were also concerned with possible impacts to the Chinese-American community, especially its senior members, many of whom have limited English skills and rely on Chinatown for services and social contact. Eventually taking the name of the Chinatown Senior Housing Committee¹, the group formed the twin goals of revitalizing Chinatown and serving the broader needs of Portland's Asian and Chinese elder communities.

One of the group's main strategies for revitalizing Chinatown is to increase its Asian and Chinese residential population. Like other Chinatowns, Portland's is located in the older section of the central city and is experiencing development pressures from the expansion of the central business district. However, unlike other well-known Chinatowns, such as those in San Francisco and Vancouver, Portland's Chinatown does not have a sizable Chinese or Asian-American residential population. The 1990 Census reported a mere five residents of Chinese descent in the census tract in which Chinatown is located. The Chinatown Senior Housing Committee believes that a vital tool in revitalizing the area will be to bring back a residential component, to help struggling businesses and re-activate the daily street life. This is consistent with Portland's long-standing commitment to a strong central city and more recent efforts to increase housing opportunities throughout the central city. By making efforts to attract Asians to Chinatown, the Committee believes the area's unique cultural identity will be preserved. The Committee also believes that Chinese seniors, in particular, would benefit from the creation of housing

¹ Members include local Chinese business owners and professionals who have been active in previous and current planning processes in Old Town/Chinatown. Other members include a real estate broker who is helping secure a development site and an advisor from the Portland Development Commission.

options in Chinatown, the historic and symbolic center of Portland's Chinese community.

The Committee has also identified the need for a strong cultural community center to serve the region's Asian and Chinese populations. Asian seniors, many of whom remain isolated from mainstream society due to cultural and linguistic barriers, may be especially in need of the benefits of a community center which brings together social services, cultural amenities and opportunities for social contact. While Portland is home to nearly 70,000 people of Asian ancestry, it is the only major city on the West Coast without a strong, centrally located community center oriented towards Asian Americans. There are a number of social service and cultural organizations scattered across the Portland metropolitan area, but none serve as a community center for Asian Americans of all ages and of all Asian cultures. Organizations such as the Chinese Service Center, located in Southeast Portland, focus strongly on the social service and mental health needs of the Chinese elderly, while the Asian Family Center, located in Northeast Portland, primarily serves younger immigrants from Southeast Asia. Asian churches are located throughout the

region, but there is no central location where the different church congregations can come together in fellowship.

Portland's Chinese community lacks a visible, centrally-located cultural center and museum which is accessible to all. The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) has a small museum on the fourth floor of their building and a small Chinese library, but these are not easily accessible to the public.



Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association

On the basis of these perceived needs, the Committee has begun to plan a senior housing and cultural community center project, which they hope will simultaneously help revitalize Chinatown and serve the needs of older Chinese and Asian citizens. The cultural community center is also seen as a way to make Chinese and Asian cultural assets more accessible to all residents of the Portland region.

The Time is Now...

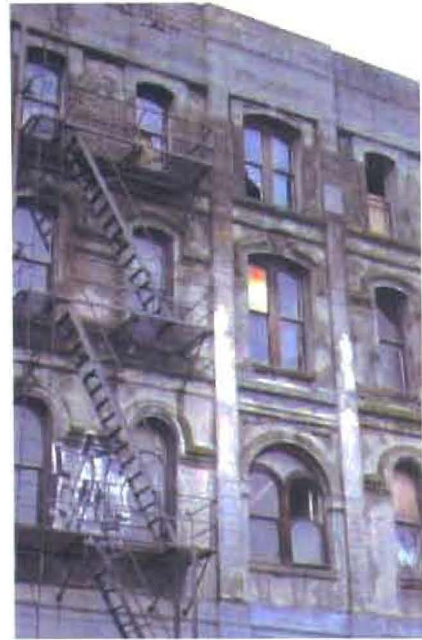
Numerous planning and development efforts have been undertaken in Chinatown in the past two decades. An earlier development plan resulted in the installation of a Chinese gate that dramatically marks the entrance of Chinatown, and red lamp posts and bi-lingual street signs on each street corner

which reinforce the uniqueness of the neighborhood. The 10-block area bounded by West Burnside, Northwest Glisan, and Northwest Third and Fifth Avenues has been designated a historic district, helping to emphasize the area's rich Chinese legacy. Chinatown has also modestly benefited from being within the River District urban renewal area, seeing some storefront improvements and the extension of the Downtown Transit Mall to Northwest Fifth Avenue, on the western border of Chinatown.

Despite these efforts, Chinatown has continued to lag behind other areas in the central city. Many buildings remain physically neglected. Crime and homelessness are a problem. Businesses are struggling.

However, the trend of disinvestment may be shifting rapidly. Several new housing developments are being built just outside Chinatown along the 5th Avenue bus mall. The adjacent Pearl District has emerged as a popular residential, arts and retail neighborhood. The expected transformation of the abandoned railyards into a dense residential neighborhood in the River District on Chinatown's northern edge gives promise of new life and activity in North Downtown. Also, the Port of Portland is building new headquarters at the northeastern corner of Chinatown. Major public commitments have been made to bolster the Chinese cultural presence with the multi-million dollar Classical Chinese Garden project which will serve as a major regional tourist attraction. All of these public and private investments point to a great interest in the neighborhood, and in the case of the Garden, its history. The Chinatown Senior Housing Committee hopes to capitalize on the momentum of these recent accomplishments.

Unfortunately, a potential drawback to these new investments is an increase in property values. This may reduce the amount of land available for large-scale development and possibly limit the types of developments that are viewed as economically feasible, such as affordable housing or community buildings. Development invariably poses a threat of diluting the historical character of the neighborhood. The Committee hopes to contribute to the revitalization of the neighborhood while guiding development in a manner that is complementary to Chinatown as a historic and cultural district. But, most importantly, the Committee would like to transform Chinatown from a symbolic center to an active and vital center positively serving current unmet needs of the Chinese- and Asian-American communities.



Chinatown Building with Vacant Upper Story

The Committee's Project

The Chinatown Senior Housing Committee envisions a mixed-use senior housing development with an associated cultural community center. The vision is inspired by other senior housing projects, such as the Legacy House in Seattle's International District and On Lok in San Francisco.



Legacy House

Honoring our history

Many of the region's Asian and Pacific Islander elderly live in the International District amidst familiar sights, sounds and smells. Today, one out of three International District residents is over the age of 60. A majority are Asian and living on less than \$6,000 a year.

Affordable housing is scarce, and many elderly live without basic amenities. Increasing frailty, lack of resources, and language and cultural barriers often creates isolation and despair.

Brochure for Legacy House in Seattle's International District

The initial development schematic, as determined by the Committee, includes the following elements that could either be developed as a two-phase project or broken down into smaller multi-phase developments:

Senior Apartments: A four- to five-story complex would include approximately 75 fully equipped apartments restricted to seniors who are able to live independently.

Senior Assisted-Living Facility: This facility would include approximately 50 units for seniors unable to live independent of frequent medical care and attention. Medical services would be available on-site for residents.

Both of the residential developments would include street-level retail space emphasizing Asian businesses such as an Asian bakery, an Asian restaurant, a Chinese-language bank branch, an Asian market, or offices for Asian community groups or social services.

Cultural Community Center: This center would house a wide range of community services and facilities, possibly including meeting rooms, banquet facilities, Asian gallery or museum space, theatre, auditorium for performances or cultural events, recreation and exercise room, class rooms, Chinese library/reading room, and social service offices.

The Committee's goal is to provide a place where seniors can reside in a context that is welcoming and which allows for opportunities to meet new people, establish friendships and celebrate Asian cultures. While the Committee's intent is to welcome people of all races, they hope to focus their efforts toward the Asian community. To summarize, the vision is to develop a senior housing project designed to serve the needs of Asian seniors and to

incorporate a cultural community center for the entire region's Asian American population, as well as contribute to the revitalization of Chinatown.

Progress to Date

The Committee is currently in the early stages of planning the project. Although they have a strong vision, they still have a significant number of critical tasks ahead of them, the most important of which are securing a site, obtaining a developer, and working out the details for funding the project. State-secured bonds and a gap loan from the Portland Development Commission are probable sources of funds. However, additional monies will likely be needed, especially for the community center component.

The Committee is exploring various fund-raising options and the possibility of either partnering with existing community-based organizations or incorporating as a new non-profit organization.

In addition, the Committee still needs to make important decisions on rent levels, basic design components and whether to include condominiums for homeownership options.

Our Work: A Needs Assessment

Professional Planning Workshop Group

The Professional Planning Workshop Group consists of four Portland State University students in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program. The Planning Workshop represents the culmination of the MURP program and allows students the opportunity to put their planning knowledge and skills into practice. Essentially, the Workshop Group acted as a consultant to the Chinatown Senior Housing Committee. The Group's tasks are outlined below; the remainder of this report represents the research and analysis on which final recommendations are based.

Role of the Workshop Group

The primary task of this report was to document the need within Portland's community for the Chinatown housing and cultural community center project. This needs assessment was seen as a way to build momentum for the project within the community, and as a potential tool in seeking project partners, developers, and funders. The Workshop Group and Committee agreed that, although the project will be oriented towards the region's diverse Asian community, the scope of the research would be narrowed to Portland's Chinese-American population. This was due primarily to limited resources and time constraints, Chinatown's historic and symbolic role as the center of the Chinese community, and the fact that several Committee members are Chinese American, with extensive knowledge of and connections to Portland's Chinese community.

Beyond the primary task of information gathering and analysis, the survey and interviews were seen as a way to seek meaningful input from the project's intended beneficiaries. This citizen outreach work was intended to help determine the extent of need for the project—and thus aid in determining the initial feasibility—but also to seek community input about location and design, and to help ascertain which elements to include in the project's final configuration.

Finally, the Workshop Group sought to challenge some of the Committee's basic assumptions. Although these "hard questions" are found in different parts of this report, examples of the kind of questions asked are: "Is

Chinatown, in fact, the best place to build senior housing for Chinese Americans?" and "Is Chinatown still important to Portland's Chinese community?" The Committee's project stands a better chance of success if these kinds of questions are addressed from the outset.

Context: Population Profile

The following demographic, social and cultural information provides a contextual framework for understanding Portland's Chinese-American community and a starting point for the needs assessment. Unless otherwise noted, all demographic data are from the 1990 Census of Population and Housing, published by the U.S. Census Bureau. Although data from the Census is extremely useful, it is important to understand its limitations. For example, many of the reported social and economic characteristics are derived from weighted sampling procedures, which may result in inaccuracies, especially when examining smaller sub-populations, such as Chinese seniors in Portland. In addition, minority populations, especially those with large immigrant populations, as in the case of Chinese Americans, may be under-reported due to language difficulties and fears of government-sponsored activities. Despite these difficulties, the Census is often the most reliable source of demographic information.

Population, Geographic Distribution and Immigration

The 1990 Census reports 48,816 Asian residents in the Portland-Vancouver area, of whom 9,862 are Chinese. Within the Chinese population, there are a total of 3,413 households and 2,340 families, constituting 0.67 percent of the region's total population. Chinese residents constitute 20 percent of the region's Asian population, the largest Asian sub-population. The Vietnamese population is second with 17 percent.

A conservative population estimate finds that there were approximately 12,500 Chinese in the region by 1996, an increase of 27 percent (see Appendix D for estimate methodology). This increase is due largely to steady immigration. Between 1990 and 1996, approximately 3,000 people legally migrated from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong to Oregon, with 2,700 individuals, or 90 percent, settling in the Portland area (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1990-1996). Almost half of Portland's 1990 Chinese residents were born in China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan. In addition, many of Portland's immigrants from Vietnam are ethnic Chinese and retain a strong Chinese identity (Leo, Feb.17, 1999). With steady in-migration since 1990, the ratio of foreign-born to American-born Chinese has probably increased. Although recent data on the Chinese

Chinese Population In Portland Metropolitan Area

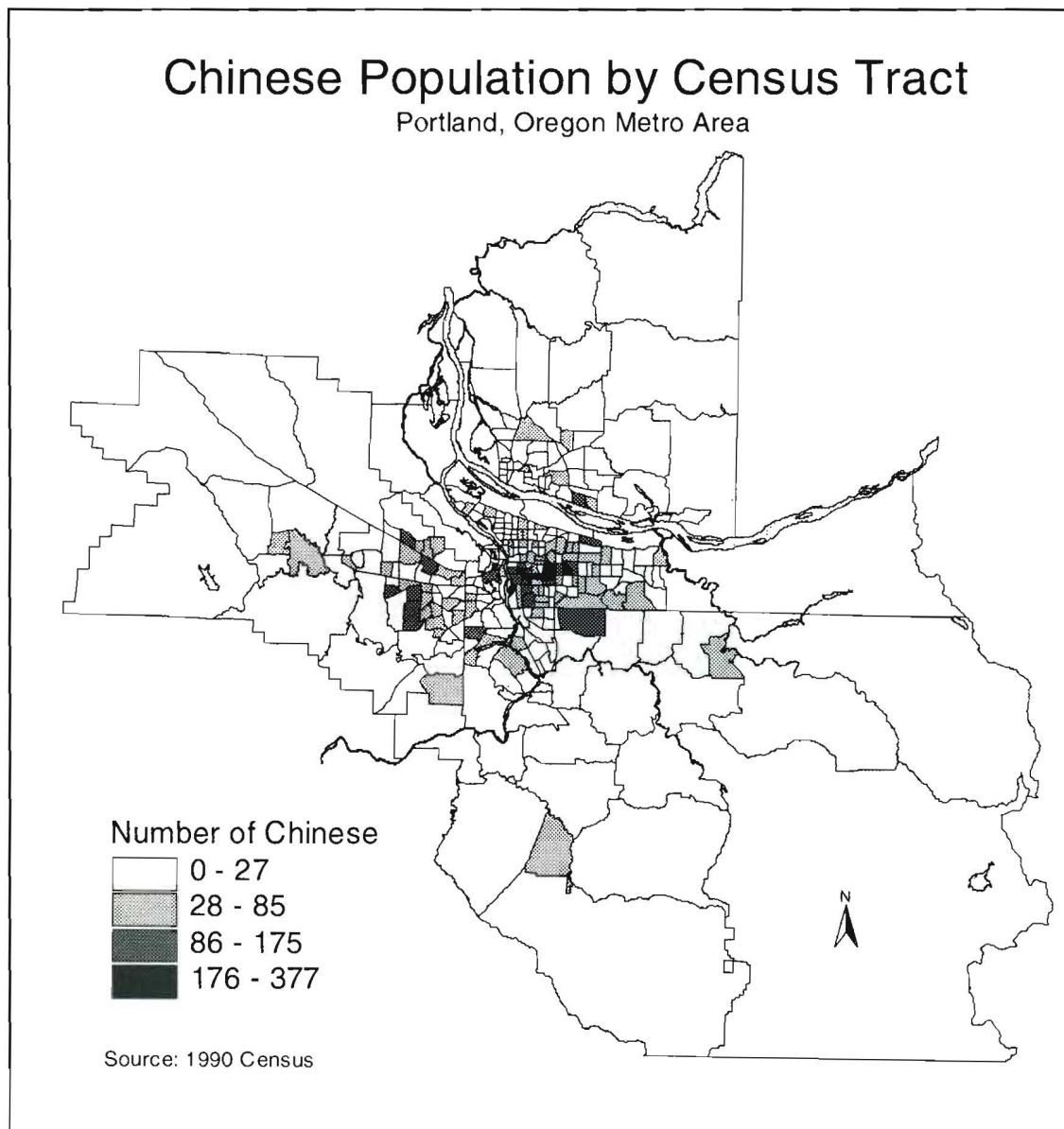
	1990	1996*
Total	9,862	12,500
60 years and older	1,213	1,560

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

*Estimated population (See Appendix D)

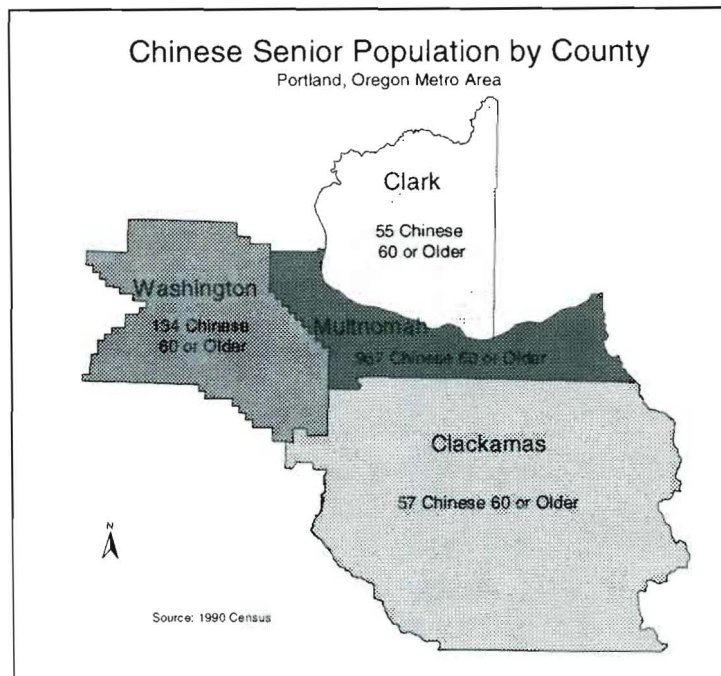
population's natural increase (births minus deaths) in Portland is not available, the Census Bureau reports that only 14 percent of the rapid rise in the national population of Asians and Pacific Islanders is due to natural increase; 86 percent is due to immigration (Bureau of the Census, 1997).

A total of 1,213 Portland Area Chinese persons are age 60 or older, constituting 12.4 percent of the Chinese population. In comparison, about 16 percent of the area's total population is age 60 or above. This lower percentage of seniors in the Chinese population may reflect the fact that immigrants, who form more than half of Portland's Chinese population, tend to be from younger age cohorts. A conservative estimate finds that, by 1996, there were 1,560 Chinese persons age 60 or older in the four-county metropolitan region (Appendix D).



The Chinese population is not evenly distributed in the region. Multnomah County alone accounts for almost 64 percent of the four-county area's 1990 Chinese population. This is followed by Washington County with almost 20 percent, Clackamas County with almost nine percent, and Clark County, Washington, with just over seven percent. At a finer level of analysis, Chinese residents are most heavily concentrated in the Southeast neighborhoods of Portland, where a majority of the census tracts have a higher percentage of Chinese residents than the region's average of 0.67 percent. The six census tracts in the region with over 175 Chinese residents are all located in Southeast Portland. In addition, there is a relatively large Chinese population in Washington County, where five census tracts contain between 86 and 175 Chinese residents. Significantly, the census tract which includes Chinatown had only five Chinese residents in 1990, although, based on anecdotal evidence, this number is probably higher at the present.

The distribution of the Chinese senior population roughly mirrors that of the total Chinese population, although, with 81 percent of the Chinese population age 60 or older, there is a greater concentration in Multnomah County. Washington County follows with 11 percent, Clackamas County with five, and Clark County with four. Multnomah County's prominence may reflect the relative availability of affordable senior housing options and the availability of public transit.



It is important to recognize that Chinese Americans form a heterogeneous group. Chinese arrived in the United States at varying times and from different areas of Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and other Asian countries. This results in a diversity of economic and social conditions and differing degrees of acculturation to American life among immigrants. Many immigrants who arrived in the United States prior to 1965, before the quota system based on "national origin" was abolished, have struggled with poverty and a lack of education and job skills (Gou 1998, Mangiafico 1988, Ho 1995, Chan 1991). While these immigrants may have lived in the United States for many years,

employment and economic opportunities available to them were often limited and did not adequately provide for their retirement years.

Compared to Chinese immigrants who arrived prior to 1965, who tended to come to the United States at a younger age, a large proportion of recent Chinese immigrants have reached retirement age before they arrive. One national study estimates that 30 percent of the total number of Chinese immigrants each year are over 50 years old (Gou 1998). Personal interviews suggest that many younger immigrants settle in Portland for educational and professional opportunities and then later send for their parents and grandparents. Since 1965, approximately three-fourths of Asian immigrants to the United States list family reunification as their motivation for immigration (Chan 1991).

The immigration experience can be difficult, especially for older people. In *Health, Medicine and Belief—Chinese-American Elderly in a Developing Multi-Cultural Urban Community*, Zibin Gou reports that the process of resettlement in a new country often causes profound physiological, psychological and socio-cultural stress (1998). Although the degrees to which immigrants experience these stresses may differ, the elderly are particularly vulnerable to acculturation stresses.

Linguistic Ability and Communication Barriers

According to the 1990 census, in the Portland metropolitan region, approximately 7,000 Chinese persons over the age of five, or more than 78 percent, speak a language other than English. Southern Chinese dialects, including Cantonese and Teisan, are the most common in the Portland region, followed by Mandarin and Taiwanese (Leo, Feb 17, 1999). More than 3,800 Chinese individuals, or 43 percent, report that they do not speak English "very well." Both of these figures are slightly higher than those for the area's Asian

population as a whole. The language barriers are even more pronounced for Chinese elders, many of whom have difficulty learning an alphabet-based language such as English (written Chinese is not alphabet-based). Of Chinese persons age 65 or older, 752, or 90 percent speak a language other than English, and 529, or 63 percent do not speak English "very well."

Language Ability of Chinese in Portland Metropolitan Area

	Total	60 years and older
Speaks a Language Other Than English	78%	90%
Does Not Speak English "Very Well"	43%	63%
Resides in Linguistically Isolated Household	30%	38%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Among Chinese households, 1,036 or 30 percent, (containing 2,547 persons) are linguistically isolated. These are households in which no person age 14 or over speaks only English and no person age 14 or over speaks English "very well." Again, Chinese elders find themselves at even more of a disadvantage, with 317 persons age 65 or older, or 38 percent, residing in linguistically isolated households.

A major cause of distress among Chinese-American seniors is the language barrier. Communication concerns affect their lives at a variety of levels. The inability to speak English well makes it difficult to participate in many everyday activities. Often, just going to the market or going to the bank can be difficult if a person is unable to communicate. Catherine Lo, a volunteer worker at the Chinese Service Center, stated that Chinese seniors often experience difficulties in accessing medical care because of a lack of bi-lingual health care providers and interpreters able to accurately translate and explain medical terms. A visit to the doctor requires a translator to make the appointment, accompany the senior to the office, and then assist at the pharmacy (Lo, Feb. 18, 1999).

Communication can also be difficult with other family members. Seniors who do not speak English may be unable to communicate with their American-born grandchildren who may not speak Chinese. They may also speak different Chinese dialects than other members of their extended family. Communication can be hindered further by customs of speaking. For instance, the traditional Chinese senior may speak in a manner that is not considered direct or is confusing for younger generations, such as "speaking around the issue" (Leo, Feb. 17).

Intergenerational Cultural Conflicts

Cultural conflicts have a number of ramifications for Chinese seniors. As the influence of Chinese cultural norms and traditional values diminish through acculturation, the deterioration of the mental and physical health of Chinese-American elders has accelerated dramatically (Gou, 1998). Many seniors come to the United States to be reunited with their families, but often have difficulties adjusting to the different family structures and roles in American society. Traditional Chinese culture is based strongly on extended family ties. It is common for three, four and even five generations to live in the same household or very near each other. Traditionally, younger people tend to have great respect and trust for authority figures and often take responsibility for

taking care of parents. Dr. Gou reported that the failure of the younger, Americanized generation of Chinese Americans to carry on these filial piety traditions has been a source of shame and depression for Chinese seniors (1998).

According to Victor Leo, a Portland social worker and expert on Chinese culture, inter-generational conflict is further exacerbated by differences in food preferences (Feb. 18, 1999). Older immigrants may prefer to eat traditional Chinese food such as rice, fish and vegetables, while the younger generations are more accustomed to the American diet. A number of national studies have concluded that the “American” diet, which tends to contain more fats, can also be detrimental to the health of Chinese seniors (Barringer, 1993).

Victor Leo, as well as others interviewed, explained that conflicts may arise from notions of personal space (Feb. 18, 1999). Many Americanized children consider their older Chinese parent to be “nosy” and intrusive, while the Chinese parent does not understand why there is conflict. Since the family is so central in Chinese culture, stresses associated with family conflict, especially when related to cultural issues, can cause psychological problems, frustration and depression among Chinese seniors.

These generational and acculturation issues contribute to conflicts within households that contain older Chinese, often resulting in the “need” for the older members of the family to live elsewhere—often by themselves, isolated from their families and fellow Chinese. Some older Chinese will even return to China if the conflicts associated with acculturation become too great. For many Chinese elders who are living with their children, the need for their own housing is becoming greater. Often, more assimilated Chinese Americans no longer want their parents living in their homes, or as the family grows, the home becomes relatively too small and the elder parents must find new homes. Because of communication problems and limited incomes, finding housing can be difficult for the Chinese senior.

Household and Housing Characteristics

According to the 1990 Census, Portland’s Asian and Pacific Islander households average 3.01 persons per household, compared to 2.49 persons per household for white households (figures for Chinese households were unavailable). Fifty-five percent of Chinese families, or 1,296 families, in the Portland area have children under the age of 18. This is ten percentage points lower than the region’s Asian population but only slightly higher than the

general population. Eighty-four percent of Chinese families (1,960 families) contain a married couple. Fewer than eight percent of Chinese households are headed by females with no husband present.

However, in Multnomah and Washington Counties (the only areas for which these figures are available), of the 424 households with a Chinese household head age 65 or older, 143, or 34 percent had no husband present. A total of 195 households with a Chinese household head age 65 or older, or 46 percent contain only one person. Forty-four percent of the two counties' households with a Chinese household head age 65 or older have no vehicle available. These factors may significantly contribute to the isolation of older Chinese Americans in Portland.

Of the 2,784 households with a Chinese household head in Multnomah and Washington Counties, 1,680, or 60 percent own their home and 1,104 or 40 percent are renters. Chinese seniors appear to have an even higher rate of home ownership than the general Chinese population. Of the units occupied by Chinese age 65 or older, 288, or 68 percent are owner occupied, and 136 units, or 32 percent, are renter occupied.

Education and Labor Force Characteristics

In general, Portland's Chinese population is very well educated. In 1990, 59 percent of the Chinese population age 25 and above had at least some college, compared to 39 percent for the region's total population. Although there is no data available for the Chinese senior population, it is likely to be less well educated than the Chinese population as a whole, given long-term education trends in both the United States and China (Zhang, March 3, 1999).

The Chinese labor force in the Portland area is comparable to the general populace in terms of employment rates, although there are important structural differences. For instance, although the Chinese have a slightly higher percentage of employed persons in managerial and professional occupations, 25 percent of their workforce is occupied in the service sector, compared to 13 percent for the region's workforce as a whole. Service sector jobs often provide fewer retirement benefits, which may increase the need for low-income housing options for Chinese-American seniors. Also significant is the fact that 71 percent of Chinese families in the Portland area contain two or more workers, 10 percentage points higher than the general population.

Income and Poverty Status

According to the 1990 Census, median household income for Portland's Chinese population is \$30,830, just slightly below the region-wide figure of \$31,071. Interestingly, the median family income for Chinese families is \$37,824, more than a thousand dollars greater than the region-wide figure of \$36,768. This may in part be explained by the larger number of workers per family among the Chinese population. Per capita income for the Chinese population is significantly lower than for the metropolitan population, \$13,413 compared to \$15,078.

Income Levels of Chinese in Portland Metropolitan Area

	Chinese	Total
Median Household Income	\$30,830	\$31,071
Median Family Income	\$37,824	\$36,768
Per Capita Income	\$13,413	\$15,078

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Although median income figures for Chinese elders were not obtained, indirect evidence indicates that they have significantly lower incomes than the general senior population. For instance, 16 percent of Portland Chinese households obtain income from Social Security, with a mean

income of \$6,895, compared to 24 percent and a mean income of \$8,364 for the general population. Even fewer Chinese households receive retirement benefits—seven percent with a mean income of \$8,217, compared to 15 percent and a mean income \$9,125 for the region's general population.

Poverty appears to be more prevalent in the senior Chinese population than in the metropolitan senior population as a whole. Nine percent of Chinese families with a household member age 65 or above have incomes below the poverty line, more than double the four percent figure for the region. However, this is significantly below the 21 percent figure for Portland's senior-headed Asian families. Thirty-one percent of unrelated Chinese individuals age 65 or older are below the poverty line, compared to 22 percent for the region.

Reaching the Chinese-American Community

A crucial element of the needs assessment was to obtain and analyze the opinions of the Chinatown project's intended beneficiaries. Surveys were distributed and interviews were conducted in order to gather both broadly-based and detailed information from Portland's Chinese community.

Gathering information from the Chinese-American senior population posed several challenges. The most obvious was the substantial language barrier between the English-speaking researchers and the primarily Chinese-speaking target population. Because Chinese seniors with limited English speaking skills were considered by the Committee to have the greatest need for housing and social gathering options, methods for reaching this group were critical.

The Chinatown Survey

A survey was determined to be the easiest means of gathering information from a large number of Chinese Americans in the short time available. The survey was crafted to address issues specifically related to the Committee's vision for senior housing and a cultural community center. In order to limit the survey to one page, and on the assumption that senior housing would be the most feasible part of the overall development, questions related to senior housing were emphasized. The Chinatown Survey was modified from a draft survey developed by Portland Development Commission (PDC) staff. The PDC draft was expanded with several questions drawn up in consultation with Portland State University (PSU) faculty. Prior to broad distribution of the survey, several Committee members distributed the survey on a trial basis to determine if the survey format and questions were understandable. Only minor changes were made to the survey after the trial run, so those responses are included in the aggregate results.

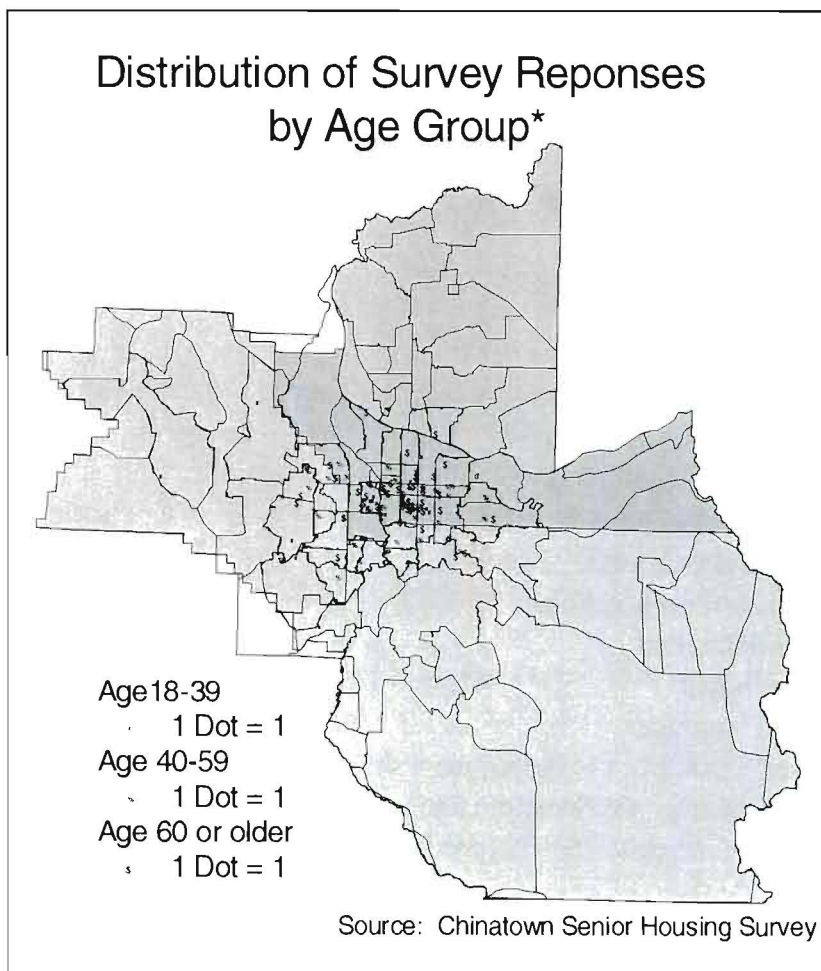
The final survey included 17 questions, ranging from "How interested are you in living in Chinatown?" to "Where is the best place for Asian-oriented senior housing in the Portland area?" Rosaline Hui, editor of the *Portland Chinese Times*, a weekly Chinese-language newspaper, translated the survey into



Article and Survey in the *Portland Chinese Times*, January 1999

Chinese. The survey was designed to accommodate both Chinese and English readers, with questions printed in Chinese on one side and English on the other. The return address on the survey was to Chin's Imports, which is owned by Committee member Betty Jean Lee, because potential respondents might feel more comfortable completing the survey if it was returned to a local Chinese business rather than to a Workshop Group member's home, PSU or PDC. In early January, the survey was inserted in 2,000 copies of the *Portland Chinese Times*, which is distributed throughout the Portland metropolitan region to subscribers, restaurants and grocery stores.

The *Portland Chinese Times* also ran a front-page article on the proposed project, with a photo of Betty Jean Lee, to introduce readers to the Committee's proposed project, the purpose of the survey, and why it was important for Chinese Americans to participate in the survey.



Readers completed and returned 192 surveys. (See Appendix A for a complete copy of the survey.) Fifty-two percent of the surveys were completed in Chinese, with the remainder in English. The survey was designed to be applicable to all age groups, but the main focus of the survey was Chinese seniors. The first ten questions were general questions applicable to all age groups, and the remaining seven questions specifically addressed issues related to senior housing. Forty-one percent of the surveys were from readers 60 years of age or older, 43 percent from readers in the 40-59 age group, and 16 percent

from the 18-29 age group.

Respondents were asked to fill in the zip code of their residence. The map on page 18 illustrates the geographic distribution of survey respondents. The responses mirror the geographic distribution of the Chinese-American population in the metropolitan region, with the largest portion of completed surveys from Southeast Portland.

Many survey respondents provided additional comments at the end of the survey that helped illuminate their survey answers, thoughts on Chinatown and their level of interest in the Committee's proposed project.

At the end of each survey, respondents 60 years of age and older were given the opportunity to provide information to allow a follow up interview. The responses to this section were critical in contacting Chinese seniors for face-to-face interviews.

While the survey responses represented broad geographic and age ranges, care must be taken in generalizing from our sample to the Chinese population as a whole. The sample size of 192 responses in total, and 80 responses from Chinese seniors, is insufficient to allow scientific statistical procedures. In addition, self-selection biases resulting from the method of survey distribution may be present. Readers of the *Portland Chinese Times* already interested in Chinatown were expected to respond to the survey at a higher rate than disinterested readers; therefore the body of survey respondents may be more committed to Chinatown and more interested in living there than the true population. However, in conjunction with interview results and other research, the survey allows a reasonable portrait of the Chinese community to be constructed.

Interviews with Chinese Seniors

While the surveys provided a basic profile of the attitudes of Chinese-American seniors towards the Chinatown senior housing project, personal interviews provided the opportunity to explore specific issues in more depth and to obtain information not included in the more static survey. For example, the interviews process explored seniors' reasons for coming to the United States, their current living situation and aspects of their family relationships. Personal interviews also provided a context with which to understand and interpret the survey results, as well as personalizing the population the Chinatown Senior Housing Committee hopes to serve.

Twenty interviews were conducted in total, of which seventeen were with Chinese-American seniors. Almost half of the interview subjects lived in affordable housing, 15 percent lived with their children, and 10 percent lived in houses that their children had purchased for them. Most of the interview



Chinese Senior in Portland

subjects were identified from the Chinatown senior housing survey. Three translators were hired to set-up interviews and translate during the interview process. The translators also arranged several interviews with their acquaintances who had not initially responded to the survey.

The majority of survey respondents spoke little English so the translators were essential. While the use of the translators was invaluable—the majority of interviews could not have been done without translation—there were limitations. The most significant was the potential loss of content during translation. The translators did not provide word-for-word translations of the interviews, and often summarized the responses of the interview subjects. While the main thrust of the interviewees' opinions was captured, important nuances and meanings were inevitably lost.

Interviews were held at the interview subject's place of choice. A number of interviews were held at public libraries (PSU and the Multnomah County Library) and the remaining interviews were held in the homes or workplaces of the interview subjects. The interview subjects' places of residence were well dispersed geographically, with a concentration in inner Southeast Portland, and in senior affordable housing in downtown Portland. Interviews were also conducted with residents of Aloha, Lake Oswego, Tigard, and Clark County.

A standard set of interview questions was used to allow for continuity among the responses and to provide a template from which to start the questioning, but the format allowed the exploration into other issues as they arose in natural conversation. Interviews lasted from 20 minutes to one hour.

What We Heard

The survey and interview results provided crucial information in analysis of the proposed senior housing and cultural community center development in Chinatown. The Chinatown Senior Housing Committee based its vision on a number of assumptions about the Chinese-American community in Portland and the needs of Chinese seniors. Interviews and survey results substantiated a number of assumptions by the Committee, but the results also illuminated a number of issues that the Committee will need to address in its proposed development.

Several prominent themes emerged from the body of interviews, consistent with and further dimensioning the results of the survey. These themes are: the importance of Chinatown to the Chinese-American community; the social isolation among Chinese seniors; the elements necessary for a successful senior housing project; the importance of making Chinatown more livable; and finally, the fact that the envisioned project will benefit everyone in the region, not just Chinese seniors.

Chinatown Important to the Chinese-American Community

The Chinese-American community is interested in seeing a revitalized Chinatown. Ninety-six percent of the survey respondents considered a “healthy and vibrant Chinatown” important or very important to the Chinese American community. Some survey respondents and interviewees had specific ideas of what they would like to see to increase the activity in Chinatown. For instance, one person was not interested in living in Chinatown, but hoped: “Chinatown could become an entertainment, shopping district incorporated with tourism and eating places.” Another survey respondent commented that revitalization efforts should balance three different functions: “Love the senior, encourage the middle-aged, and educate the youth.”

Some interviewees stressed the need for planning and revitalization efforts to concentrate on providing “cultural content” in Chinatown that reflects current trends in Chinese life. One Chinese professional emphasized lack of culture: “It only looks like a Chinatown—it is only a frame.” At the same time, many interviewees said the

“I wish the Chinatown revitalization plan can be accomplished as soon as possible.”—Southeast resident

“I would like to see a lively Chinatown in the near future.”—Southeast resident

***“Make it culture-oriented... a joyful landmark not only for American Chinese, but also anyone who likes Sinaian culture in Oregon”—
Beaverton resident***

revitalization should also include physical renovation that makes Chinatown “look more Chinese,” by using Chinese styles in building and installing public art, such as Chinese sculptures. These types of changes to Chinatown would make it more inviting to Chinese Americans, encourage non-Chinese to visit Chinatown, and “help Portland prosper and bring in more tourism to Oregon.” Establishing a healthy and vibrant Chinatown was also viewed as something that would benefit everyone in Portland, not just the Chinese-American community.

While the community supports revitalization efforts in Chinatown, not everyone is interested in living in there. Many of the interviewees’ ideas for revitalization focused on Chinatown as a cultural and commercial center, not a residential center. For example, a new immigrant from Hong Kong considered Chinatown “a commercial place, not a good place for people to live.” This feeling is further illustrated in the number of people not interested in living in Chinatown. Only 24 percent of all survey respondents were “very interested” in living in Chinatown, 32 percent were “somewhat interested” and the remaining 44 percent were “not interested.” Seniors were slightly more interested in living in Chinatown with 37 percent marking “very interested,” compared to 24 percent for all respondents.

Chinatown a Frequent Destination for Chinese Seniors

The survey revealed that three-fourths of the respondents visit Chinatown at least once a month, with nearly 50 percent visiting at least once a week. Seniors were almost twice as likely to visit Chinatown every day than the younger populations. Most of our interview subjects moved to Portland as older adults and had minimal English skills. For example, one of the seniors interviewed visited every day, and said he went to “find people to talk to” in Chinese. Other senior interviewees said they went to Chinatown to buy the Chinese newspaper and eat at Chinese restaurants. Some Chinese Americans who were either more acculturated (spoke more English and relied on family and social services less) or younger professionals said Chinatown is more important to Chinese seniors because “it’s more like home,” and provides a place in Portland where older Chinese can be around more traditional Chinese culture.

Other reasons cited for visits to Chinatown were to buy special Chinese foods and participate in Chinese celebrations. Some seniors mentioned going to Chinatown to access government services (actually services were located in Old Town and Downtown Portland). Some walked from their Downtown apartment to Chinatown to get some exercise.

While many of the survey and interview respondents visited Chinatown once a month, 23 percent rarely came to Chinatown and some interviewees who came once a month did not necessarily visit because of the uniqueness of the neighborhood or a need for specific services in Chinatown. One woman who visited about once a month said, “I go there because I have time...I am not drawn there for any special reason, but go there as often as anywhere else in the city.” A Tigard resident expressed, “There’s no reason to go there.”

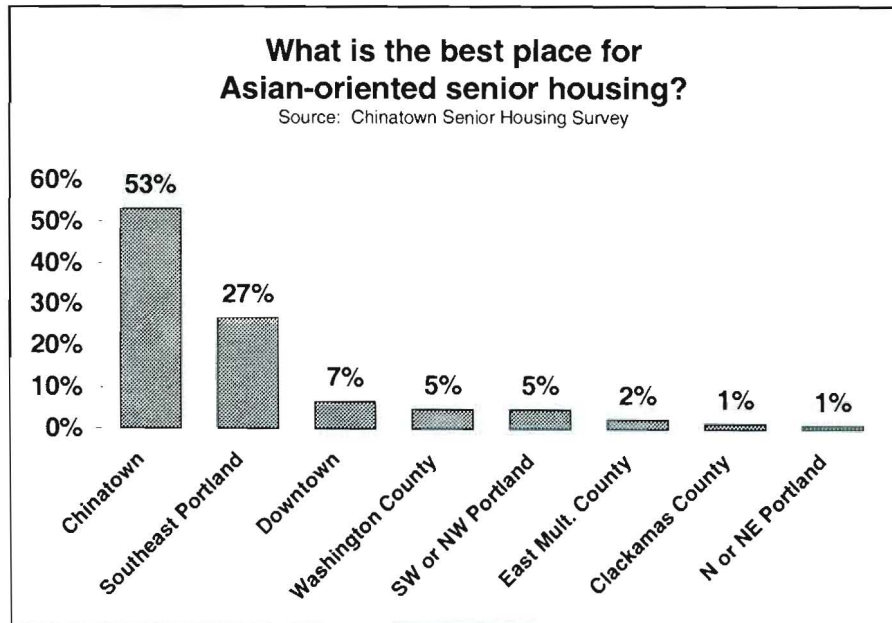
Chinatown Best Location for Senior Housing Project

The most interesting finding from the surveys and interviews was that despite concerns with crime, safety and cleanliness (addressed in the next section), the overwhelming majority said Chinatown was the best location for “Asian-oriented senior housing in the Portland area.” The graph below illustrates the preference for Chinatown as the location for the senior housing component of the development project. Southeast Portland was considered the second best location, primarily because of the number of residents who already live in Southeast and the presence of churches and the Chinese Service Center.

Even when interviewees talked about negative aspects of Chinatown and described their level of involvement in organizations, churches or social service programs outside of Chinatown, they said that Chinatown was the best location for senior housing. The main reasons for choosing Chinatown over

another area in Portland were the transit and service conveniences associated with Chinatown’s central location. For example, a senior resident of inner Southeast Portland said, “If I moved I would want to be closer to Chinatown...there are better bus routes and it’s easier to

commute to other places.” Another interviewee reiterated the convenience of transportation, as well as having “restaurants right there,” and government

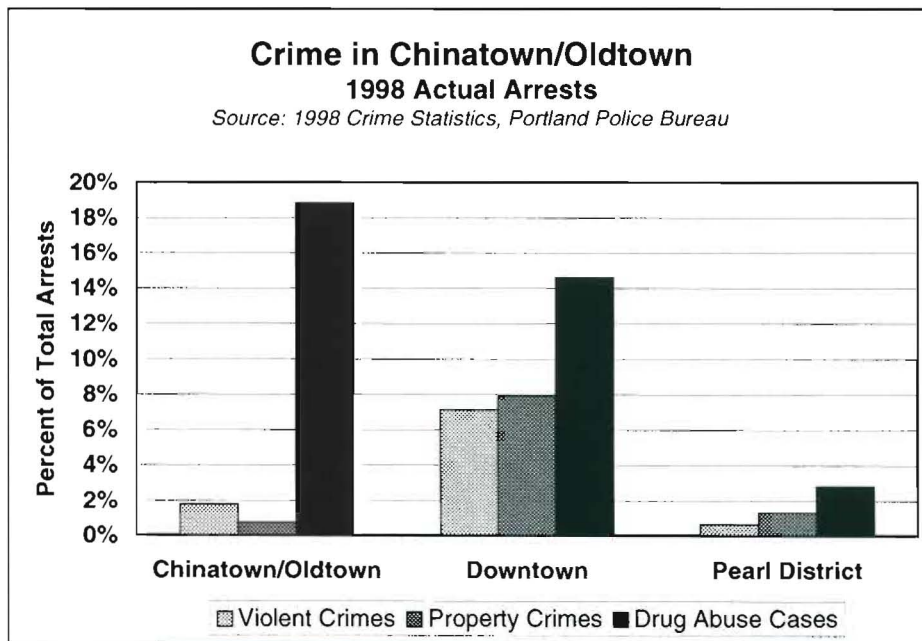


offices used by Chinese seniors nearby. Many saw senior housing in Chinatown as mostly helping those seniors who may feel isolated in other areas of Portland.

Concerns with Safety and Cleanliness

Survey and interview respondents continually brought up concerns of crime and safety, homeless wandering the streets, and the need for a “cleaner and tidier” Chinatown. While these may not be issues the Chinatown Senior Housing Committee can address, they are important perceptions of the area.

The survey asked, “What things would negatively influence your decision to live in Chinatown?” Crime was the item most often cited. Interviews and comments written on the surveys pointed to drug deals as being of primary concern, with some concern about “robbery.” The degree to which people felt unsafe in Chinatown varied considerably among people interviewed. When asked if Chinatown was unsafe, one woman responded, “Why is it unsafe? What is unsafe about it?” commenting that Chinatown did not seem any different than other parts of downtown Portland. Another man said, “I can’t say I feel unsafe because I didn’t have a bad experience and have never seen some unsafe things happen...but, I have heard it is unsafe.” These comments point to a problem with the perception of Chinatown, but others commented on personally feeling unsafe in Chinatown. Two Chinese residents of downtown said, “In the evening, I am afraid to wait for the bus there,” and “Chinatown is not a great place...pretty messy, too many criminals.” A suburban resident said, “Chinatown is for gangs and restaurants.”



Several survey comments cited the need for a strong police presence. These comments, more often than not, were from respondents who visited rarely and who may not be aware of the staffed police office in Chinatown on

Fourth Avenue. Statistics from the Portland Police Bureau for 1998 show that the high perception of drug deals is correct—19% of the city's drug arrests take place within the boundaries of the 30-block area of the Old Town/Chinatown neighborhood. However, that area has only 1% of the city's property crimes, and 2% of the city's violent crimes. The figure for property crimes is less than reported in the neighboring, more affluent Pearl District.

The perception of crime and safety appears to be linked to the presence of homeless and mentally ill persons in the Chinatown/ Old Town area. While not an option of the survey, some respondents wrote in "homeless" or "wanderers" as a response for the question: "What things would negatively influence your decision to live in Chinatown?" Common interview responses were similar to this Chinese elderly woman's comment: "Sometimes there are a lot of homeless around, I have great fear of them." A Tigard resident said one of the best changes that could occur in Chinatown would be to "get rid of shelters, people are really scared by the wanderers...you don't want to go there if you don't have to, especially in the evenings."

Another issue that arose in surveys and interviews was the cleanliness of the physical environment of Chinatown. One interviewee put it simply, "Chinatown is unclean, people pee in the streets, and it stinks." He elaborated on this cleanliness issues by stating, "I think it is a problem with management." A few survey responses also described Chinatown as either "poorly managed," or as needing "management."

Social Isolation Among Chinese Seniors

Surveys and interviews revealed that being around Chinese culture is very important to those seniors who otherwise feel isolated by language and cultural barriers. For example, in response to a question about the biggest problems he faced living in Portland, a Chinese senior who had moved to the United States six years ago responded, "Language is the major problem....It's just hard to buy things because of language." Arranging medical or social service appointments were impossible without translation help from his son, and then he needed additional help when he went to the appointments. Language barriers also made it impossible for him to meet people who didn't speak Cantonese.

Being Near Other Chinese More Important for Chinese Seniors

The importance of living near other Chinese or Chinese Americans was divided along generational lines. It was “very important” for the oldest age group to live near Chinese or Chinese American people, “important” for the middle age group, and “not important” for the younger group. These results substantiated assumptions made by the Chinatown Senior Housing Committee, as well as claims in many of our literature sources. The response to this question also helps illuminate the age differentials found in other survey question responses.

How important is it for you to live near Chinese or Chinese-American people?

	Age 18-39	Age 40-59	Age 60+
Very important	21%	12%	41%
Important	31%	56%	36%
Not important	48%	32%	24%

Source: Chinatown Senior Housing Survey

Of the seniors interested in living in Chinatown, 99 percent said it was either important or very important to live near other Chinese. One inner Southeast resident mentioned that he went to Chinatown “to meet people” because he “felt very isolated.” He described how it was very hard to meet people and said that if he lived near other Chinese he would make more friends (currently he relies on the Chinese church directory to try to find new friends).

Shifting Family Structure: Seniors Living on Their Own

“It is very different in China where the family lives all together.”—Senior resident in Southeast

“It is inconvenient for me to live with my daughter.”—Senior resident in Northwest

“My parents would feel lonely here because it is so quiet in Lake Oswego. In China they can do things by themselves.”—Lake Oswego resident

Families were a common topic discussed in the interviews with Chinese seniors as well as professionals working with Chinese seniors in Portland and other cities. As Chinese culture has changed—in China and among Chinese living in the United States—large, extended families have become less common and many seniors do not live with their children. The cultural changes often result in conflicts between the younger family members and their aging parents or grandparents. It is becoming more common for younger Chinese to not want to live with their parents. Some younger Chinese who anticipate bringing their parents to the United States are interested in finding separate housing, rather than finding housing that would accommodate multiple generations.

Three of the seniors interviewed lived with their children and other interviewees discussed friends and family that had moved to the United States and initially lived with their children. One woman said, “The children bring them over to look after their children—making them do all the cooking, cleaning, and day care.” A few of the interviewees did say they came to the United States to help with their grandchildren, but now that the “house is too small” their children wanted them to find their own housing.

Access to Families Important

The Chinese seniors interviewed said that it was very important to have access to their families. One Chinese senior explained how “their children may want them there [Chinatown] so they aren’t bothered, but the parents will not want to be far away.”

While the survey did not address issues related to family, the questions related to negative influences brought to light some of the concerns. In the survey, lack of parking was the second most cited negative influence for living in Chinatown. This was an interesting response since most Chinese seniors do not drive. The interviews revealed that the issue was not a lack of parking, but instead lack of *free* parking. Interviewees were concerned that families would not come to visit very often if free parking was not available continually. So, while many seniors are interested in living in Chinatown, they do not want to be isolated from their families.

Elements of a Senior Housing Development

Low Rents Essential

Low rents are very important for Chinese seniors interested in living in Chinatown. The survey indicated preferences for the lowest rent levels. The table below illustrates the preferences of the Chinese seniors who indicated they are either “very interested” or “somewhat interested” in living in Chinatown.

Rent Levels For Chinese Seniors “Very Interested” or
“Somewhat Interested in Living in Chinatown

Desired Rent Level	Age 60 and Over
Up to \$390	58%
\$390-\$550	34%
\$550-\$700	4%
Over \$700	0%
Not Interested	4%

Source: Chinatown Senior Housing Survey

The lowest rent level option on the survey was “up to \$390” per month. These figures were based on affordable housing rent levels in PDC projects. The majority of seniors interested in living in Chinatown are only willing to pay the

“I would move there if rents can be kept low...\$450 out of pocket is too high.”
Senior resident in Northwest

“If government subsidized the rent I would go there.”
—Senior resident in Downtown

“On my limited income I can’t live in Chinatown.”
Senior resident in Northwest

lowest rent level. A number of survey respondents actually wrote in lower rent levels, such as \$150 or \$200. Most of the seniors interviewed were on very limited incomes and were eager to discuss the rent levels necessary for them to be able to move to Chinatown. In some cases, they lived with their children and needed low rents to be able to move out, but the majority of seniors interviewed already lived in government subsidized buildings where the rent levels are as low as \$150 (set at 30% of their income.) A common range of rent levels desired was \$150 to \$300. One interviewee had moved to Washington County because he was able to find affordable housing that

required that he only pay 30% of his income. Another senior couple, currently living in subsidized housing, stated they would “have no reason” to move to Chinatown if rents were not kept very low.

Survey results did indicate that one-third of Chinese seniors interested in living in Chinatown are willing to pay between \$390 and \$550 per month, but few are willing to pay \$550 to \$700, and no seniors interested in living in Chinatown are willing to pay over \$700 for rent.

Demand for One and Two-Bedroom Apartments

The majority of seniors “very interested” or “somewhat interested” in Chinatown would live in a one-bedroom apartment. The table below lists the answers to the survey questions “How many bedrooms would you want in an apartment or condominium in Chinatown?” Many survey respondents wrote in the range of bedrooms they wanted. The lowest number in the range is reported in the table, for instance a person who wrote in “1 or 2 bedrooms” is listed as “1 bedroom.”

Number of bedrooms desired by seniors “very interested” or “somewhat interested” in living in Chinatown

Bedrooms	Age 60 and Over
Studio	2%
1	42%
2	38%
3	10%
No response	8%

Source: Chinatown Senior Housing Survey, 1999

Desired Housing Features: Security and Translation Services

Seniors who answered the survey cited a security system, translation services and special cooking facilities as the top three features in a housing development. Special cooking facilities refer to: 1) specific requirements of Asian cooking – a preference for gas stoves (as opposed to electric), and the need for a fan that exhausts rather than re-circulates smoke; and 2) a cultural standard of an enclosed kitchen, as opposed to a kitchen that opens into a dining area or living space. The entire body of respondents, including the younger and middle-aged groups, cited a security system, on-site health services and translation services as the top three features. Balconies are rated much farther down the list, but were mentioned in the interviews. The need for parking has already been discussed, and interest in the Chinese garden is discussed in the following section.

What features would make senior housing attractive to elder Chinese-Americans?

	All Responses	Age 60 and Over
Security system	53%	56%
On-site health services	46%	39%
Translation services	41%	42%
On-site rec. and gathering space	45%	41%
Assisted living	34%	20%
Special cooking facilities (gas and enclosed kitchen)	28%	32%
Access to transit	32%	19%
Common courtyard	25%	15%
Individual laundry facilities	22%	28%
Special access to Chinese Garden	18%	23%
Secure parking	19%	15%
Chinese signage	13%	4%
Balconies	13%	16%
Common laundry facilities	9%	11%
Fireplaces	6%	4%
Other	3%	4%

Source: Chinatown Senior Housing Survey, 1999

Making Chinatown More Livable

The interviews and surveys illuminated other ways in which Chinatown could be more livable as a residential neighborhood. In addition to mitigating the negative influences of crime and cleanliness mentioned earlier, an Asian Cultural Community Center, a supermarket with low prices, and social services were all cited as “positive influences” for living in Chinatown.

UPA LIBRARY

Asian Cultural Community Center Important

The survey asked, “What things would positively influence your decision to live in Chinatown?” An Asian community center was the single most frequent response, with nearly 50 percent of the survey respondents choosing this option. The interviews provided an opportunity to gain further understanding about what people would value in a cultural community center. Many of these elements could be incorporated into either senior housing or a community center. Desired features include Chinese language satellite TV, movies and a Chinese reading room or library; a recreation room to socialize and play games like chess and Mah Jong, an exercise space to practice Tai Chi, and a dance or performance space. One senior said that Chinese people like to watch television together, and that a common TV room would be popular. A 57-year old Aloha resident said he would like to see a Chinese library that had Chinese newspapers, magazines and books. Another interviewee, a senior living in the subsidized housing, said “I’d also like to see a Chinese library with movies, kind of like a senior club...room for karaoke and an audio facility with classical music.” Other suggestions included a recreation room with billiards, and a “place to watch performances and recreation facilities.”

The desire for Asian entertainment, which ranked fourth as “things that would positively influence your decision to live in Chinatown,” was strong. One senior said, “I’d like to have a cinema that shows Chinese movies.” This was echoed by a 44-year old Chinese professional from Aloha, who said, “there should be a movie theater which shows current Chinese and Hong Kong cinema. Also there could be an art museum with modern Chinese art.”

Chinatown Needs a Supermarket

After a cultural center, a supermarket was the second most common response. While Chinatown has a number of smaller markets, it is without a major grocery store or multi-purpose supermarket. A common theme in the interviews was that the current markets in Chinatown are too expensive and, for some people, too small. Most people were interested in a one-stop supermarket, “like Fred Meyer where you can buy everything” rather than a specialty store, but the main emphasis was on a “cheaper grocery.” The supermarket was important for all age groups, but more important for the younger group of respondents.

Chinese Seniors Want to Be Near Social Services

Chinese seniors were also interested in having access to social services in Chinatown. Currently, non-governmental social service agencies primarily serving the Chinese community are not located in Chinatown. The Chinese Service Center, which serves a large number of Chinese seniors with meals, counseling services, and recreation, is located in Southeast Portland at 47th and Woodstock. The Asian Family Center, which serves younger Chinese (and Southeast Asian) families, is located in Northeast Portland at 44th and Glisan, and Lutheran Family Services is located on Southeast 39th Avenue. Some government agencies serving Chinese seniors such as Housing and Urban Development and Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services are located downtown, which is near Chinatown.

Chinese Seniors Want Parks and Open Spaces

Parks and open space ranked fifth as a positive influence. Both interviewees and survey respondents commented about the Classical Chinese Garden. One Chinese senior interviewed was so excited about the Chinese Garden that he wrote to families and friends in China about it. Seniors are interested in being able to access the garden for free. Some conversations with interviewees implied that not all people are aware that there will be a fee for entrance into the garden. For instance, one man commented the Garden would become “the homeless garden.”

Project to Benefit All Cultures

Another interesting theme that came up during the interviews was that the proposed senior housing development would benefit more than just Portland's Chinese residents. One survey respondent, a senior who was “very interested in living in Chinatown,” commented, “We will all get along and Chinatown [will] become an authentic place. This will help Portland prosper and bring in more tourism in Oregon. It's good for the city and for the country.”

“This just isn't for Chinese, it is for everyone.” – Southeast resident

“Chinatown doesn't have to be all Chinese.” – Lake Oswego resident

“Don't isolate Chinatown, bring other cultures to Chinatown.” – Chinese senior

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon the Workshop Group's research, which included expert interviews, demographic analysis, the administration of a survey, and citizen interviews.

Develop Senior Housing

Locate in Chinatown

We recommend that the Committee continue to pursue senior housing in Chinatown. Chinatown was overwhelmingly considered the best location for housing aimed at serving Chinese elders, both by the general Chinese population and by seniors themselves. The only other location people showed interest in was Southeast Portland. If senior housing is considered in Southeast Portland, its proximity to the Chinese Service Center will be important.

Build Very Affordable Rental Units for Seniors

The Committee should limit the Chinatown senior housing project to rental units only. Of the Chinese seniors interested in living in Chinatown, few were interested in owning a condominium.

We recommend that the senior housing development consist of all affordable units. The majority of seniors interviewed were on limited incomes and would only consider moving to Chinatown if the rents were very low. A large majority, (91 percent) of elder Chinese survey respondents indicated that they would only be willing to pay rents below \$550, and 57% indicated that they would only be willing to pay rents below \$390.

If it is necessary for the housing development to be mixed-income or mixed-tenure because of funding availability, the variety will need to include a sizable percentage of below market-rate units. (See Appendix G for different affordability levels.) Care should be taken in deciding the affordability and renter/owner mix for the development. If the mix of units includes market-rate units and/or condominiums, one potential undesirable outcome could result in the affordable portions being occupied primarily by Chinese or Asians and the market-rate or owner-occupied units by non-Asians, possibly resulting in segregation within the development.

Build Independent Units, Wait on Assisted Living Units



The MacDonald Center

The project should emphasize independent units, as the majority of Chinese seniors are interested in living independently. With the new development of the MacDonald Center assisted living facility along Northwest Fifth Avenue, one option is to delay the development of a Chinatown assisted living facility in order to determine if substantial need is met by the MacDonald Center. Outreach efforts to the Asian and Chinese communities by the MacDonald Center should be encouraged.

Build One and Two-Bedroom Apartments

The senior housing development should include a mix of one- and two-bedroom apartments. Of the seniors interested in living in Chinatown, 45 percent wanted one-bedroom apartments and 37 percent wanted two-bedroom apartments. Federal subsidies may restrict the construction of two-bedroom apartments for single, low-income seniors.

Include Security Systems and Free Parking for Visitors

Given the wide-spread concern about crime and safety, the building should have a security system, secure parking, and other measures to increase safety such as ample exterior lighting. While the majority of Chinese seniors do not drive, it is important to have ample on-site parking available for visiting family and friends.

Coordinate with Existing Social Service Organizations

In order to maximize the use of existing resources, the housing project should establish links with existing social service providers and cultural organizations such as the Chinese Service Center and the CCBA. These organizations can provide access to potential residents, possible on-site services to residents, and cultural and social activities.

Include Ample Social Spaces and a Resident Services Coordinator

The survey and interview results indicate that opportunities for socializing and human contact are of primary importance to Chinese seniors. Therefore,

common areas are a critical element of the project's design if it is to satisfy the needs of seniors and the Committee's goal of lessening the isolation of seniors. Depending on the size of the project, several gathering places should be provided to allow people to sit, converse, or play Mah Jong and chess. A room for exercise activities such as Tai Chi and a performance or dance space should be considered. A multi-purpose room could serve as an area for traditional and contemporary Asian-language entertainment.

In the absence of a community center, a resident services coordinator can provide a number of important services. The coordinator should be familiar with the social services that are available in the city, as well as organizations serving Chinese and Asian Americans in the region. This coordinator can also serve as an activity coordinator for senior residents. The number of staff necessary will depend on the level of social service and activity coordination desired.

Include a Satellite TV Room

A recreation room including a satellite TV was requested by a number of Chinese seniors to provide a common space for watching Chinese programs and keeping up to date with international events.

Include Translation Services

Because many seniors may need assistance filling out forms, making appointments and reading other materials, translation services will be a significant asset to the project.

Partner with an Experienced Housing Developer

Nonprofit

Portland is home to a number of nonprofit housing developers and community development corporations with extensive experience in building affordable housing. The Committee should take advantage of these assets and actively seek partnerships with existing organizations. If the Committee wishes to form a nonprofit organization to further revitalization efforts in Chinatown, they could initially partner with an existing CDC to build the senior housing and then spin-off a new nonprofit from that development, as was done in a similar project in San Francisco. Appendix E contains a list of potential nonprofit partners

For-profit

Another possibility is to partner with a for-profit developer. Several individuals and companies in the region, such as Brian McCarl, have developed affordable housing in the central city. PDC has had extensive experience working with for-profit developers to build affordable housing.

Research Fair Housing Laws for Affirmative Marketing

If the senior housing center is built, the developers should explore affirmative marketing and tenant selection under the Fair Housing Law. For more information, contact the Fair Housing Council of Oregon (listed in Appendix F). The Council occasionally holds workshops that address proactive marketing strategies for people of color and “what you can and cannot say” in marketing housing. The Appendix also includes local attorneys experienced in Fair Housing Laws.

Increase Marketing Efforts of Existing Housing

One alternative to building a senior housing project is to encourage new affordable housing projects built in Chinatown, such as the Fifth Avenue Plaza and the MacDonald Assisted Living Center, to market to Chinese seniors. Marketing should be bi-lingual, in Chinese and English. A marketing strategy could include “for rent” signs in Chinese, ads in the *Portland Chinese Times* and the *Asian Reporter*, putting notices up at the Chinese Service Center, the Northwest Pilot Project, and the HUD office where housing applications are turned in, and mailing announcements to all the organizations and people listed in the resources and contact list in Appendix F. Due to the concentration of Chinese seniors in the Clay Tower, which has a year-long waiting list, marketing could include posting notices there as well. One option is to put together an informational packet for local developers to make it easy for them, and to help them realize that marketing in only English excludes many Chinese and Asian seniors.

We recommend contacting the developer of the MacDonald Center assisted living units to discuss their marketing plan and the potential for marketing to Chinese seniors.

Create a Cultural Community Center

The cultural community center will be the most expensive part of the Committee’s envisioned development. Project developers may have difficulty funding both the initial construction of the center and its on-going operations.

However, the community center is extremely important in serving the needs of Portland's Chinese senior community and revitalizing Chinatown. Without some aspects of a community center present, many Chinese will be less interested in living in Chinatown. If the community center is not built, or is deferred, key elements, outlined below, should be integrated with the senior housing project or retail space.

Coordinate with Existing Social Service and Cultural Organizations

Like the senior housing project, the cultural community center should establish links with existing organizations to maximize the use of existing resources. The community center should serve as a centralized location for information and referral.

Include Recreation, Library, Class Rooms and Gallery or Museum

Recreation and exercise facilities: The center should include areas where Tai Chi and other exercise classes can take place. This could include a multi-purpose room that has other uses such as meeting space, performance areas, or a place to show Chinese movies.

Asian cultural library/reading room: Access to Chinese newspapers, magazines and books was important to many Chinese seniors. Many seniors came to Chinatown to pick up the Chinese language newspapers and are interested in access to other Chinese language reading materials.

Class rooms/meeting rooms: The community center should have rooms available for language classes, citizenship classes, and arts and crafts classes. It should also be available for local groups and community organizations to use for meeting space. Opening up the community center to groups throughout the region will increase the level of use of the center and its visibility within the community.

Asian cultural museum and gallery space: A museum or gallery could serve as a regional attraction for the Asian community, as well as an educational opportunity for other cultures to learn more about Asian culture and history in Portland. This would serve as a complement to the Classical Chinese Garden and more strongly link the Committee's development to the broader regional community. Alternatively, the retail space below the senior housing development could house an Asian gallery. This could serve as an exhibition hall for traditional and contemporary Asian arts, but could also include space for art classes.

Promote Existing Cultural and Social Resources in Chinatown

Chinatown currently has cultural and social resources that seem to be underused. If the cultural community center is not built, there are ways of increasing community activities within Chinatown's existing organizations and other organizations already serving Chinese Americans.

The CCBA has a small Chinese museum which highlights the history of Chinese in Portland. Currently, this museum is on the fourth floor of the CCBA building. This is not very accessible for people with limited mobility. Poor signage makes it unclear whether the museum is open to the general public. Improved signage and a location that is more visible and accessible may allow more people to utilize this resource. Coordinating the Chinese museum with other Asian history collections such as the Japanese American history museum at the Nikkei Legacy Center could strengthen Chinatown as a cultural and historic district.

The Chinese School has a number of classrooms that are used on the weekend; the rooms may be available for other uses. Linking the school to a senior housing development may also have positive impacts by involving seniors and children in activities together. A number of family associations have meeting space in Chinatown. Opening these rooms to other Chinese may expose people to social organizations they were unaware of and encourage more interaction, fellowship and interaction among the Asian community in Portland.



Gee How Oak Tin Family Association

Final Reflections

This project was one of the final requirements for the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program. As planners, we chose this project in order to broaden our understanding of the living conditions of people not of our own ethnicity and to explore the ethical dimensions of the AICP code of ethics, which demands that planners serve the public interest.

As four European Americans living in Portland, a predominantly white city, the project gave us an opportunity to fill the gaps in our education related to planning for a multicultural community. Had we gone to school in Los Angeles or San Francisco, we would have been living in cities with large Hispanic, African American and Asian populations, and thus our planning education, especially through our peers and our jobs, would have included a broader understanding of living conditions for those populations.

We were honored to participate in this project. It was a unique learning opportunity for us, and a chance to gain entrée into some situations that would have otherwise been inaccessible. These included dinner at a Chinese Family Association; a tour of the Buddhist altar at Gee How Oak Tin; a visit to the CCBA museum; and with the help of translators, conversations with non-English speaking seniors. We also enjoyed a wonderful meal at the Seven Seas restaurant where our Committee members introduced us to items not on the English language menu (or so they told us).

Our learning curve was substantial. We learned some basic facts about Chinese culture--for instance, that Chinese has one written language, but hundreds of different dialects. These include Cantonese, Mandarin, Taiwanese, Fukinese, and Teisan to name a few. We also learned about the profound importance of family relationships in Chinese culture and how changes in these relationships have been difficult for Chinese seniors.

We also learned a great deal about the vast number of Chinese and Asian organizations in the Portland region, ranging from the Chinese Service Center to the Chinese Physicians and Dentists Association and Chinese Language Schools. And we learned that Portland has a Chinese language newspaper, the *Portland Chinese Times*.

More importantly, we learned that making broad sweeping claims about any one group is very difficult. A great many people from different backgrounds, including language and countries, make up the Chinese community in Portland. This project reminded us that, in a diverse, multi-ethnic society, planners have a responsibility to try to understand and serve many public interests.

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Chinatown Survey

Thank you for taking time to answer this voluntary survey. The Chinatown Senior Housing Committee is a group of concerned citizens, business owners, and professionals has formed a committee to help shape the future of Portland's Chinatown. Currently, a joint effort is underway by the City of Portland with the Chinese community to provide a strategic plan to encourage development of housing and businesses in the Chinatown area. The overarching goal of this group is to encourage revitalization of Chinatown and increase its significance to the Asian-American population, especially Chinese-Americans.

The committee is considering a proposal to build a senior housing complex and cultural community center aimed at serving Asian-Americans, as well as other options for housing Asian-Americans of all ages in Chinatown. For any project to be successful, we must hear from people in the community. We are beginning by contacting Chinese-American residents across the region and asking them how they view Chinatown and what they would like to see in that neighborhood. We would like to hear from as many people as possible of Chinese ancestry living in the Portland area to help us determine where to focus our efforts.

We invite you to complete this voluntary survey and help us better understand what the Chinese-American community would like to see in Chinatown. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and you do not need to identify yourself.

Please pass the survey on to Chinese-American friends and family. If you have questions about the survey, would like more copies, or would rather complete the survey over the telephone, please call Betty Jean Lee at 224-4082 or Louis Lee at 227-2621.

We recognize the importance of your participation in this project and thank you very much for your comments.

Betty Jean Lee & Louis Lee
Chinatown Senior Housing Committee

1. How often do you visit Chinatown?
☐ Every day ☐ Once a week ☐ Once a month ☐ Rarely
2. How important is a healthy and vibrant Chinatown to Portland's Chinese-American Community?
☐ Very important ☐ Important ☐ Not important
3. How interested are you in living in Chinatown?
☐ Very interested ☐ Somewhat interested ☐ Not interested
4. What things would positively influence your decision to live in Chinatown? Please choose the top three (3) items most important to you.
☐ Availability of a supermarket ☐ Availability of schools
☐ Availability of a bank with services in Asian Languages
☐ Proximity to employment
☐ Proximity to Asian associations and societies
☐ Proximity to religious institutions
☐ Availability of recreation and exercise facilities
☐ Access to Asian language entertainment
☐ Proximity to medical and dental services
☐ Asian cultural community center
☐ Availability of parks and open spaces
☐ Access to social service agencies
(With language classes, performances, meeting space, etc.)
☐ Other (specify: _____)
5. What things would negatively influence your decision to live in Chinatown? Please choose the top three (3) most negative influences.
☐ Lack of parking ☐ Crime
☐ Too busy, too crowded ☐ Lack of parks and open space
☐ Far from family/friends
☐ Lack of services (banking, dry-cleaning, insurance agent etc.)
6. If you were to rent an apartment in Chinatown, what monthly rent would you be willing to pay?
☐ Up to \$390 ☐ \$390-\$550 ☐ \$550-\$700
☐ \$700-\$900 ☐ \$900-\$1,300 ☐ Over \$1,300
7. If you were to buy a condominium in Chinatown, what price would you be willing to pay?
☐ Up to \$120,000 ☐ \$120,000 - \$150,000
☐ \$150,000 - \$220,000 ☐ Over \$220,000
☐ Not interested in owning
8. How many bedrooms would you want in an apartment or condominium in Chinatown? _____
9. What is your current household size? _____
10. How important is it for you to live near Chinese or Chinese-American people?
☐ Very important ☐ Important ☐ Not important
11. Where is the best place for Asian-oriented senior housing in the Portland area?
☐ SE Portland ☐ N or NE Portland
☐ Chinatown ☐ Downtown
☐ SW or NW Portland ☐ Washington County
☐ East Multnomah County ☐ Clackamas County
12. What features would make senior housing attractive to elder Chinese-Americans?
☐ Balconies ☐ Common Courtyard
☐ Fireplace ☐ Security system
☐ Special cooking facilities (e.g. gas stove or enclosed kitchen)
☐ Individual laundry facilities ☐ Access to transit
☐ Common laundry facilities
☐ Translation services ☐ Secure parking
☐ On-site recreation and social-gathering space
☐ Special or discounted access to Classical Chinese Garden
☐ On-site basic health services and referral
☐ Assisted living facilities (on site medical, cafeteria, etc.)
☐ Chinese language signage
☐ Others (please specify: _____)
13. What languages do you speak?
☐ Mandarin ☐ Cantonese ☐ English
☐ Taiwanese ☐ Other (specify: _____)
14. What is your age?
☐ 18-39 ☐ 40-59 ☐ 60 or older
15. If you are 60 or older, would you be interested in independent living or assisted living in senior housing?
☐ independent living ☐ assisted living
16. If you are 60 years or older, would you consider being interviewed, in order for us to gather more detailed information about the needs of Portland's Chinese American elders? (This is strictly optional.)
☐ Yes ☐ I will need a translator who speaks _____
I may be contacted at:
Name: _____ (Optional)
Phone: _____ (Optional)
Address: _____ (Optional)
17. What is the city and zip code of your current place of residence? _____
18. If you have any additional comments regarding housing and the future development of Chinatown, please use the space below.

Thank you for your Input!

-----Please fold, tape and mail to the address below-----



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
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UNITED STATES

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PORTLAND OR 97209-9828



Appendix A: Sample Survey

中國城發展計劃調查問卷

首先多謝每位願意抽時間來填寫這份問卷。

中國城老人住屋委員會是社區中一班關心波特蘭市中國城發展的商人、專業人士及市民聯合起來組成了一個委員會商討這個計劃的發展。波特蘭市政府現正聯同本地的華人社會商議一連串的計劃，希望在波特蘭的中國城內能有系統住屋及商業的發展。本委員會最主要的目的是希望本地的中國城能像其他美國大城市的中國城一樣，成為一華人社區腳的地方，使其有生氣起來。

在本委員會的計劃中，我們希望能在中國城內有一服務華人的老人中心及社區會堂，亦希望能有不同的住屋計劃，滿足不同年齡的華人。但在計劃這些建設之前，了解華人們實際的需要是非常重要的。本委員會已開始向區內的華人們詢問他們對中國城發展的意見。但我們更希望能得到大眾華人的意見，特別是一班住在波特蘭市已有好幾代的華人家族，希望在你們所提供的意見下，我們能知道應將注意力集中在那一方面。

我們希望閣下能騰出寶貴的時間，幫助我們更清楚地了解本地華人對中國城發展的意願。閣下所提供的一切資料是對保密的，及閣下可選擇不提供個人資料也可。

請各位也將這份調查問卷傳到您的親戚與朋友之中，如對這問卷有任何問題，或想要多份問卷，或希望透過電話來完成這份問卷的話，可電224-4082聯絡陳麗娟(Betty Jean Lee)女士，或電227-2621聯絡李杰泉先生。

閣下所提供的資料對整個華人社區的未來發展及對委員會的籌劃工作均是非常重要的，多謝您的合作！

國城老人住屋委員會
麗娟及李杰泉敬上。

- 閣下通常到中國城的次數？
☐ 每天 ☐ 每週一次 ☐ 一月一次 ☐ 很少
- 您覺得一個有朝氣、有活力的中國城對波特蘭的華人如何？
☐ 非常重要 ☐ 重要 ☐ 不重要
- 閣下是否有興趣在中國城居住？
☐ 非常有興趣 ☐ 略有興趣 ☐ 不感興趣
- 甚麼原因會影響您居住在中國城內的決定？（請從下列選擇最重要的三項）
☐ 有超級市場 ☐ 有學校的設立
☐ 有懂華語的銀行服務 ☐ 鄰近工作地點
☐ 鄰近華人社團及機構 ☐ 鄰近宗教場所
☐ 有康樂設施 ☐ 有華語的文娛節目
☐ 有華人文化社區中心 ☐ 有社會服務機構
☐ （內設語文班，文娛表演等）
☐ 有公園及戶外空間 ☐ 鄰近醫療及牙醫服務
☐ 其他（請註明：_____）
- 甚麼負面因素會影響您居住在中國城的決定？（請選出最不受歡迎的三項）
☐ 沒足夠的泊車地方 ☐ 區內的犯罪活動情況
☐ 太繁忙及太多人 ☐ 缺乏公園及戶外空間
☐ 距離家人及朋友太遠
☐ 缺乏服務行業（銀行、洗衣、保險等）
☐ 其他（請註明：_____）
- 閣下如想在中國城內租柏文，您願意每月付租金多少？
☐ 最多\$390- ☐ \$390-\$550 ☐ \$550-\$700
☐ \$700-\$900 ☐ \$900-\$1,300 ☐ \$1,300以上
- 閣下如在中國城內購置物業，您願意付出多少金錢？
☐ 最多\$120,000 ☐ \$120,000-\$150,000
☐ \$150,000-\$220,000 ☐ \$200,000以上
☐ 不感興趣
- 閣下希望您在中國城內的柏文有多少個睡房？

- 閣下的家庭現有成員多少名？

- 閣下對住近華人或美籍華人覺得重要嗎？
☐ 非常重要 ☐ 重要 ☐ 不重要
- 在波特蘭市中，設立華裔老人住屋的最佳地點是在：
☐ 東南區 ☐ 東西或西北區 ☐ 市中心
☐ 東麥瑪瑪縣 ☐ 北或東北區 ☐ 中國城
☐ 華盛頓縣 ☐ 卡加瑪士縣
- 老人住屋內應有甚麼設施才能吸引年長的華人入住？（請在下列中選出您應為最重要的三項）
☐ 露台 ☐ 火爐
☐ 翻譯服務 ☐ 保安措施
☐ 安全的泊車地方 ☐ 鄰近交通設施
☐ 公共庭園
☐ 特別煮食設施（如天然氣爐或獨立廚房）
☐ 私人洗衣設備 ☐ 公共洗衣設備
☐ 康樂及社區活動場所
☐ 古典中國園入場特別優待
☐ 基本醫療及轉介服務
☐ 生活輔助設施（居住建築物內有醫療或餐廳等）
☐ 區內有中文的街道名牌及招牌
☐ 其他（請註明：_____）
- 閣下能說那種語言（方言）？
☐ 國語 ☐ 廣東話 ☐ 英語
☐ 台灣語 ☐ 其他（請註明：_____）
- 閣下的年齡是？
☐ 18-39 ☐ 40-59 ☐ 60歲或以上
- 如閣下屬60歲或以上，您會否對獨自生活或入住有護理服務的老人住屋？
☐ 獨立生活 ☐ 入住有護理服務的老人住屋
- 如閣下屬60歲或以上，您會否願意接受訪問，提供更詳細資料，以協助我們了解波特蘭市年長華人的真正需要？（這全是志願性質，閣下可自由選擇。）
☐ 願意
☐ 我需要一能說_____的翻譯

我的個人資料如下：（可隨意決定填寫與否）

姓名：_____
 電話：_____
 地址：_____

17. 閣下居住的城市及郵區號碼？

18. 如對中國城的住屋及未來的發展有任何意見，歡迎利用以下的地方，發表一下閣下的寶貴意見。

多謝您的合作！

Appendix B: Survey Results in Raw Form

1. How often do you visit Chinatown?

11 Every day 89 Once a week 50 Once a month
46 Rarely

2. How important is a healthy and vibrant Chinatown to Portland's Chinese-American Community?

134 Very important 55 Important 27 Not Important

3. How interested are you in living in Chinatown?

47 Very interested 61 Somewhat 81 Not interested

4. What things would positively influence your decision to live in Chinatown?

Please choose the top three (3) items most important to you.

92 Availability of a supermarket
19 Availability of schools
52 Availability of a bank with services in Asian languages
33 Proximity to employment
44 Proximity to Asian associations and societies
15 Proximity to religious institutions
52 Availability of recreation and exercise facilities
58 Access to Asian language entertainment
45 Proximity to medical and dental services
58 Access to social service agencies
90 Asian cultural community center (with language classes, performances, meeting space, etc)
60 Availability of parks and open spaces
18 Other (specify:_____)

5. What things would negatively influence your decision to live in Chinatown? *Please choose the top three (3) most negative influences.*

129 Lack of parking 145 Crime
40 Too busy, too crowded 82 Lack of parks and open space
38 Far from family/friends 63 Lack of services (banking, dry-cleaning, insurance agent, etc.)
13 Other (specify:_____)

6. If you were to rent an apartment in Chinatown, what monthly rent would you be willing to pay?

62 Up to \$390 63 \$390-\$550 29 \$550-\$700
6 \$700-\$900 3 \$900-\$1,300 1 Over \$1,300
17 Not interested in renting

7. If you were to buy a condominium in Chinatown, what price would you be willing to pay?

<u>49</u> Up to \$120,000	<u>45</u> \$120,000 - \$150,000
<u>8</u> \$150,000-\$220,000	<u>3</u> Over \$220,000
<u>75</u> Not interested in owning	

8. How many bedrooms would you want in an apartment or condominium in Chinatown?

<u>23</u> 1 bedroom	<u>53</u> 2 bedroom	<u>25</u> 3 bedroom
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Question 9 was deleted because the term household size is ambiguous, and can be interpreted as number of people or number of bedrooms.

10. How important is it for you to live near Chinese or Chinese-American people?

<u>48</u> Very important	<u>82</u> Important	<u>58</u> Not important
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11. Where is the best place for Asian-oriented senior housing in the Portland area?

<u>58</u> Southeast Portland	<u>2</u> North or Northeast Portland
<u>10</u> Southwest or NW Portland	<u>117</u> Chinatown
<u>15</u> Downtown	<u>10</u> Washington County
<u>5</u> East Multnomah County	<u>3</u> Clackamas County

12. What features would make senior housing attractive to elder Chinese-Americans?

Please choose the top three (3) items most important to you.

<u>26</u> Balconies	<u>48</u> Common Courtyard
<u>13</u> Fireplace	<u>60</u> Special cooking facilities (e.g., gas stove or enclosed kitchen)
<u>44</u> Individual laundry facilities	<u>18</u> Common laundry facilities
<u>79</u> Translation services	<u>86</u> On-site recreation and social- gathering spaces
<u>103</u> Security system	<u>35</u> Special or discounted access to Classical Chinese Gardens
<u>37</u> Secure parking	<u>88</u> On-site basic health services
<u>62</u> Access to transit	<u>67</u> Assisted living facilities (on site medical, cafeteria, etc.)
<u>26</u> Chinese language signage	<u>6</u> Others (please specify:_____)

13. What languages do you speak?

<u>104</u> Mandarin	<u>139</u> Cantonese	<u>107</u> English
<u>17</u> Taiwanese	<u>10</u> Other (specify_____)	

14. What is your age?

<u>31</u> 18-39	<u>81</u> 40-59	<u>80</u> 60 or older
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15. If you are 60 years or older, would you be interested in independent living or assisted living in senior housing?

60 Independent living

37 Assisted living

16. If you are 60 years or older, would you consider being interviewed in order for us to gather more detailed information about the needs of Portland's Chinese American elders? (This is strictly optional)

24 Yes, in English

14 I will need a translator who speaks Cantonese

8 I will need a translator who speaks Mandarin

12 I will need a translator who speaks Mandarin or Cantonese

17. What is the city and zip code of your current place of residence?

Number	Zip code
13	97006
12	97007
3	97008
8	97015
4	97030
4	97034
5	97035
2	97062
2	97068
4	97080
2	97116
1	97123
2	97124
1	97128
2	97140
23	97201
11	97202

2	97205
33	97206
2	97209
2	97212
8	97213
18	97214
8	97215
8	97216
4	97217
3	97218
5	97219
4	97220
2	97221
4	97222
6	97223
2	97224
15	97229
2	97230

2	97232
15	97233
9	97236
14	97266
2	97267
2	97301
2	97305
1	97321
2	97366
2	97756
2	97838
9	98863
2	98684

Appendix C: Survey Question Responses in Percentages

1. How often do you visit Chinatown?

	<u>All Responses</u> <i>n=192</i>	<u>Age 60 +</u> <i>n=80</i>
Every day	6%	11%
Once a week	45%	41%
Once a month	26%	26%
Rarely	23%	21%

2. How important is a healthy and vibrant Chinatown to Portland's Chinese-American Community?

	<u>All Responses</u> <i>n=192</i>	<u>Age 60 +</u> <i>n=81</i>
Very important	68%	65%
Important	28%	31%
Not important	4%	4%

3. How interested are you in living in Chinatown?

	<u>All Responses</u> <i>n=186</i>	<u>Age 60 +</u> <i>n=75</i>
Very interested	24%	37%
Somewhat interested	32%	32%
Not interested	44%	31%

4. What things would positively influence your decision to live in Chinatown?

(Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could choose more than one answer.)

	<u>All Responses</u> <i>n=187</i>	<u>Age 60 +</u> <i>n=70</i>
Asian community center	49%	53%
Supermarket	47%	36%
Social services	33%	36%
Parks/open space	32%	27%
Asian entertainment	31%	37%
Asian language bank	27%	34%
Recreation facilities	27%	30%
Asian associations	23%	19%
Medical/dental	23%	21%
Job access	17%	3%
School access	8%	7%
Religious institutions	9%	4%
Other	9%	17%

5. What things would negatively influence your decision to live in Chinatown?

(Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could choose more than one answer.)

	<u>All Responses</u> n=190	<u>Age 60 +</u> n=77
Crime	75%	58%
Lack of parking	67%	57%
Lack of parks/open space	43%	38%
Lack of services	32%	25%
Too busy/crowded	21%	16%
Far from family/friends	20%	20%
Homeless (write-in)	2%	5%
Other	4%	5%

6. If you were to rent an apartment in Chinatown, what monthly rent would you be willing to pay?

	<u>All Responses</u> n=178	<u>Age 60 +</u> n=70
Up to \$390	33%	57%
\$390-\$550	35%	30%
\$550-\$700	16%	4%
\$700-\$900	3%	0%
\$900-\$1,300	2%	0%
Over \$1,300	1%	0%
Not interested in renting	10%	9%

7. If you were to buy a condominium in Chinatown, what price would you be willing to pay?

	<u>All Responses</u> n=175	<u>Age 60 +</u> n=70
Up to \$120K	25%	24%
\$120K-\$150K	26%	11%
\$150K-\$220K	5%	1%
Over \$220K	2%	0%
Not interested in owning	43%	63%

8. How many bedrooms would you want in an apartment or condominium in Chinatown?

	<u>All Responses</u> n=123	<u>Age 60 +</u> n=54
1	19%	30%
2	55%	59%
3	21%	11%
4	4%	0%
5	2%	0%

9. The results to question nine, which asked about current household size, are not reported because the term “household size” is ambiguous, and may be interpreted as either number of people or number of rooms.

10. How important is it for you to live near Chinese or Chinese-American people?

	<u>Age 18-39</u> <i>n=29</i>	<u>Age 40-59</u> <i>n=78</i>	<u>Age 60 +</u> <i>n=76</i>	<u>All Responses</u> <i>n=183</i>
Very important	21%	12%	41%	25%
Important	31%	56%	36%	44%
Not important	48%	32%	24%	31%

11. Where is the best place for Asian-oriented senior housing in the Portland area?

(Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could choose more than one answer.)

	<u>All Responses</u> <i>n=187</i>	<u>Age 60 +</u> <i>n=76</i>
Chinatown	61%	57%
Southeast Portland	30%	34%
Downtown	7%	11%
Washington County	5%	3%
SW or NW Portland	5%	4%
E Multnomah County	3%	0%
Clackamas County	2%	1%
N or NE Portland	1%	3%

12. What features would make senior housing attractive to elder Chinese Americans?

(Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could choose more than one answer.)

	<u>All Responses</u> <i>n=189</i>	<u>Age 60 +</u> <i>n=79</i>
Security system	53%	56%
On-site health services	46%	39%
Recreation/gathering space	45%	41%
Translation services	41%	42%
Assisted living	34%	20%
Access to transit	32%	19%
Special cooking facilities	28%	32%
Common courtyard	25%	15%
Individual laundry facilities	22%	28%
Secure parking	19%	15%
Spec. access to Chin. Garden	18%	23%
Chinese signage	13%	4%
Balconies	13%	16%
Common laundry facilities	9%	11%
Fireplaces	6%	4%
Other	3%	4%

13. What languages do you speak?

	<u>All Responses</u> <i>n=191</i>	<u>Age 60 +</u> <i>n=78</i>
Cantonese	71%	81%
English	55%	33%
Mandarin	51%	38%
Taiwanese	9%	4%
Other	5%	8%

14. What is your age?

	<u>All Responses</u> <i>n=187</i>
18-39 years	16%
40-59 years	43%
60 or over	41%

15. If you are 60 years or older, would you be interested in independent living or assisted living in senior housing?

	<u>Age 60 and Over</u> <i>n=45</i>
Independent	67%
Assisted	33%

16. If you are 60 years or older, would you consider being interviewed in order for us to gather more detailed information about the needs of Portland's Chinese-American elders?

	<u>Age 60 and Over</u> <i>n=80</i>
In English	21%
In Cantonese	20%
In Mandarin	15%
In Cantonese or Mandarin	10%
Not Willing	34%

17. What is the City and ZIP code of your current place of residence?

See Appendix B and map on page 18.

Appendix D: Population Estimate Methodology

Because data from the 1990 census is now almost a decade old, a current population estimate procedure was used in order to more accurately portray the size of Portland's Chinese and Chinese senior populations. Because of the limitations of the original census figures and additional data upon which the estimates are based, and the provisional nature of the estimate, the derived population figures should be treated with caution. For the reasons cited in the Profile section—mainly issues of under-reporting—and the fact that the estimates assume no natural increase, the derived figures are believed to be conservative. Although assuming no natural increase is methodologically problematic, it is justified somewhat by the fact that the Census Bureau has found generally low rates of natural increase among Asians and Pacific Islanders. Natural increase accounts for only 14 percent of the population growth of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the nation between 1990 to 1996. However, the Oregon Health Division has found that, together, Oregon's Chinese and Japanese populations have the lowest death rates and most favorable mortality profile in the State. This may especially influence the size of the Chinese senior population.

In order to provide a comparison, two different procedures were undertaken to estimate the total Chinese population in the Portland Region in 1996 (the most recent date for which immigration and certain Census data are available). The two results were found to be within less than one percent of each other.

The first method simply takes the number of Chinese in the region in 1990 and adds in the number of reported Chinese immigrants to the region, as reported by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The result of this estimate was 12,558 individuals. The second procedure takes advantage of Multnomah County's participation in the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), which tracks demographic trends on an on-going basis. Because only Multnomah County, of the four Metropolitan counties, is part of the ACS, and because the ACS aggregates race categories, several assumptions had to be made. First we assumed that the ratio of Chinese to Asians and Pacific Islanders in the region stayed the same between 1990 and 1996. Second, we assumed that the ratio of Asians and Pacific Islanders in Multnomah County to Asians and Pacific Islanders in the region stayed the same between 1990 and 1996. Having derived those ratios from 1990 Census data and using the 1996 ACS count of the Multnomah County Asian and Pacific Islander population, we were then able to estimate the Portland region's 1996 Asian and Pacific Islander population and finally the region's 1996 Chinese population. The result of this procedure was 12,574 Chinese individuals.

To estimate the region's Chinese senior population, we assumed that the ratio of Chinese individuals age 60 and above to the total Chinese population remained the same between 1990 and 1996. This ratio was multiplied by the average of the two population estimates described above. This yields a figure of 1,560 individuals.

Appendix E: Nonprofit Housing Developers Potential Partners for the Chinatown Senior Housing Committee

Downtown Community Housing Inc. (DCHI)
7720 SW Macadam #20
Portland, OR 97219
244-3435;
Fax: 244-7416
sgaassocia@aol.com

Sam Galbreath,
Executive Director

Housing Contacts:
Alder House (SROS):
222-1182
Kearney House
(families): 221-2160

Works to provide affordable housing in the downtown area. They currently own and manage Alder House (a SRO) and Kearney House, which contains mostly 3-bedroom units for families. DCHI has partnered with the First Presbyterian Church on several projects providing SRO, large family, and transitional housing.

- 164 rental units for single adults & families
- <60% MFI
- Downtown & close-in Portland

Programs:

- Alder House Arts Project
- Kearney Day Care Cooperative
- Resident Enterprise program
- Incorporated: 1991
- Member CDN, AOCD

Innovative Housing, Inc. (IHI)
1214 SW Washington
Portland, OR 97205
226-4368
Fax: 226-2509
Ihi@aracnet.com

Ralph Austin, *Executive Director*

IHI began in 1975 as a separate legal entity created by the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) to develop and operate special projects that they could not undertake directly. In 1989, IHI became an independent nonprofit (with their work on the Foster project). IHI has successfully completed six multifamily projects, totaling 339 units. IHI works around the region and tries to identify niches that unfilled by other nonprofits.

- 312 rental units for senior citizens, physically or mentally disabled tenants, victims of domestic violence, & low-income families
- 27 homes sold to first-time homeowners
- Greater Portland Area
- Incorporated 1989
- Member CDN, AOCD

**Northwest Housing
Alternatives, Inc.**

2316 SE Willard
Milwaukie, OR 97222
654-1007
Fax: 654-1319
hn7554@handsnet.org

Diane Luther, *Executive
Director*

Property Management:
Cascade
Guardian
Pinnacle

NHA serves very low, low and moderate income populations, developmentally disabled persons, frail and independent elderly, homeless families and persons with mental illness. NHA was established more than a decade ago when Clackamas County residents saw their community succumbing to the national decline in affordable housing. Over the years, NHA's geographic focus has broadened to address housing needs in many Oregon communities. NHA now owns and manages 66 housing projects in 13 Oregon counties.

- 744 rental units across Oregon, including 207 in Multnomah County, for elders and people with special needs
- <60% MFI

Programs:

- Annie Ross House, for homeless women & children
- Clackamas County Land Trust
- Computer Center
- Incorporated: 1982
- Member CDN, AOCD

REACH CDI

1135 SE Salmon
Portland, OR 97214
231-0682
Fax: 236-3429
dwalsh@reachcdc.org

Dee Walsh, *Executive
Director*

REACH was established by a group of community activists concerned about housing conditions in the Buckman neighborhood of Southeast Portland. Today, REACH serves seven neighborhoods in inner Southeast. Their programs include affordable housing development for renters and homebuyers, property management, the Target Area Improvement Plan program, business district revitalization, the Community Builders program, the Community Leaders program for adults and the REACH Kids program for children living in REACH housing.

- 22 homes sold
- 643 rental units, including buildings for people with special needs, senior citizens, formerly homeless women, & chronically mentally ill adults
- Inner SE Portland

Programs:

- Business district revitalization
- Public safety/anti-crime
- Community Builders
- Paint-A-Thon
- Computer room
- REACH Kids Program
- Youth\$ave
- Employment counseling
- Incorporated: 1982
- Member CDN, AOCD

Appendix F: Resources and Contact List

Religious Organizations:

Portland Chinese Buddhist
Association
PO Box 8001
Portland, OR 97201

Pastor Lyrist Yip
629-4871
Chinese Grace Baptist
6275 SW Hall Blvd
Beaverton, OR 97005

Rev. Russ Hilsinger
234-2022
Chinese Baptist
1938 SE Ladd Ave
Portland, OR 97214

Rev. Lucy Shang
771-7277
Chinese Presbyterian
4937 SE Woodstock Blvd
Portland, OR 97206

Rev. Peter Lim
646-2222
Chinese Evangelical in Beaverton
13420 SW Butner Rd
Beaverton, OR 97005

Rev. Ying-Chi Kuo
255-0382
Taiwan Lutheran
12405 SW Butner Rd
Beaverton, OR 97005

Rev. James Yang
360/944-1556
Chinese Evangelical in Vancouver
900 SE Ellsworth Rd
Vancouver, WA 98664

Pastor Bruce
775-2854
Chinese Christian & Missionary
Alliance (CCMA)
7435 SE Foster Rd
Portland, OR 97206

Rev. William Ki
236-8225
Chinese Faith Baptist
2830 NE Flanders
Portland, OR, 97232

Senior Service Organizations:
Neighborhood House Senior Center
244-5204
7688 SW Capitol Hwy
Portland, OR 97219-2489

Rev. Joseph Yeung
252-1065
Chinese Free Methodist
8406 SE Morrison
Portland, OR 97216

Loaves & Fishes/Meals on Wheels
244-3873
7688 SW Capitol Hwy
Portland, OR 97219-2489

East Portland Community Center
740 SE 106th
Portland, OR 97216

Northeast Multicultural Center
248-5211
5325 NE MLK Blvd
Portland, OR 97211

Jim Paynter
288-8303
Hollywood Senior Center
1820 NE 40th
Portland, OR 97212

Southeast Multicultural Center
235-1851
4610 SE Belmont
Portland, OR 97214

Hongsa Chanthavong
235-9396
Asian Family Center
4424 NE Glisan
Portland, OR 97215

Keith Wong
771-7977
Chinese Service Center
(Also the site of Fook-Lok Loaves
and Fishes)
4937 SE Woodstock
Portland, OR 97206

Organizations:

Denny Dang
657-7627
Asian American Foundation
8425 Cason Lane
Gladstone, OR 97027

Rosavio Aglialovo
973-5451
NW China Council
121 SW Salmon, Suite 300
Portland, OR 97204

Mary Leong
524-4020
Commission on Aging for the State

Scott Yu, President
725-3824
Chinese Friendship Assn. of Portland
PO Box 8101
Portland, OR 97207-8101

Ed Chen
Oregon Chinese Consolidated
Benevolent Association
315 NW Davis
Portland, OR 97209

Michael Chang
253-3535
Kaoshiung Association
3485 Riverknoll Way
West Linn, OR 97068

Conni Diack
663-5850
Suzhou Association
35649 SE Lusted Rd
Boring, OR 97009

Dr. Paul Leung
661-4308
3233 SW Mawcrest Pl
Gresham, OR 97080

Charles Shi
Asian/Pacific American Alliance
PO Box 15171
Portland, OR 97215

Narcissa Pimentel
Asian Pacific American Senior
Coalition
C/o 7722 N. Denver Ave
Portland, OR 97217

Paul Duong
823-3049
Refugee/Immigrant Consortium of
Oregon and SW Washington
1221 SW 4th Ave, Rm 204
Portland, OR 97204

Professional Organizations:

Dr. Kent Lee
Chinese Physicians & Dentists Assn.
12016 SE Sunnyside Road
Clackamas, OR 97015

Homer Ho
Taiwan Commerce Assn. of Portland
PO Box 1893
Beaverton, OR 97075

Keith Lee
Chinese Chamber of Commerce
2035 NW Overton
Portland, OR 97209
224-4082, fax 224-0220

Dr. Scott Wong
684-3622, 246-6722
Chinese Scientist, Engineers &
Professionals Association of Oregon
7335 SW 34th Ave

Portland, OR 97219

Clubs:

Jessica Lin
Association of Chinese Student and
Scholars at PSU
PSU Chinese Students Association
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207

Philip Chou
Taiwan Friendship Association
2085 Ridge Point Drive
Lake Oswego, OR 97034

Helen Ying
Chinese American Citizen's Alliance
2035 NW Overton St.
Portland, OR 97209-1684

Gail Louie
Portland Chinese Women's Club
3606 SE Caruthers
Portland, OR 97214

Chinese Schools:

Yan Jibao, Director
590-5518
Jiao Yin Chinese Culture and Art
School
PSU School of Education

Chinese Language School
223-9070
315 NW Davis
Portland, OR 97209

Mr. Changhua Wang
635-9409
Springleaf Chinese School
PCC Sylvania Campus
Building of Social Sciences

Chinese Language School
695-7453
2085 Rodge Pointe
Lake Oswego, OR 97024

Family Associations:

Kenny Chan
228-7772
Gee How Oak Tin
26 NW 4th Ave
Portland, OR 97209

Louis Lee
Lee Family Association

Jee Wai Cheng
289-3312
Lung Gong
6728 NE Union Ave.
Portland, OR 97211

Dickson Wong
227-0318
Soo Yuen

317 NW 4th Ave.
Portland, OR 97209

Bruce L. Wong
233-3600
Wong Family
30 SE 10th Ave.
Portland, OR 97214

District Associations:

Dan Chan
230-9398
Hoy Yin
1523 SE 39th Ave
Portland, OR 97214

Fair Housing Resources

Fair Housing Council of Oregon
310 SW Fourth Avenue, Suite 430
Portland, OR 97204-2345
(503) 412-6000

Barbara Diamond, Attorney
2110 SW Jefferson, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97201
(503) 229-0400

Zachary Zabinsky, Attorney
621 SW Morrison
Portland, OR 97201
(503) 223-8517

Appendix G: Income Levels and Housing Affordability For Northwest Pilot Project Clients in 1999

Income Source	Monthly Income	Annual Income	% of Median Family Income*	Affordable Monthly Rent**
General Assistance	\$298	\$3,576	10%	\$89
Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI)	\$500	\$6,000	16%	\$150
Half-time Employment at Minimum Wage (\$6.50/hr)	\$563	\$6,760	18%	\$169
Social Security (average)	\$650	\$7,800	21%	\$195
Veteran's Pension	\$731	\$8,772	24%	\$219
Full-time Employment at Minimum Wage (\$6.50/hr)	\$1,127	\$13,520	37%	\$338

* \$36,700 annual income is the 1999 Median Family Income for a single person in Multnomah County as determined by HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development).

** HUD defines affordable rent as paying no more than 30% of your income for housing.

Source: Northwest Pilot Project Newsletter, March 1999

